## *World view and class in the sociology of knowledge and literature*

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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'WORLD VIEW AND CLASS IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE AND LITERATURE'

The thesis is concerned with engendering formal models in the sociology of knowledge and literature that will aid the analysis of the development of aspects of world view from class elements, and the expression of world views in literature. After an introduction which reviews the general methodological approach, Part I examines theories in the sociology of knowledge (including principally those of Mannheim, Goldmann, Scheler Pareto, Parsons, and Berger and Luckmann) in the light of an analytical substructure-superstructure distinction, in order to establish the various possible modes of development of consciousness from meaningful action. Part II develops a general model for one area of the sociology of knowledge: after refining the concepts of 'class' and 'world view', it traces the ways in which aspects of world view may develop from class elements. In Part III, the general model of the development of world view from class is applied to the special case of literary world views. The literary role is examined, both in terms of authorship as a class role and in terms of the non-economic aspects of the author role. The literary act of authorship is investigated through the predominant conceptions of art as communication and expression, and the sociology of expression is found to be an important adjunct to the sociology of knowledge. Where attempts are made to analyse the meanings 'expressed' in literature, it is suggested that various aspects of literary form require recognition. Part III concludes with an examination of methodological issues that emerge from a critique of Goldmann's sociology of literature. In Part IV, the formal models developed in the earlier Parts are applied to the undertaking of two case studies, that focus upon Charlotte and Emily Brontë and their novels.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL APPROACH

### (i) Background to the Study

The theme for this thesis emerged in the late 1960s from a concern with several issues in the sociology of knowledge which seemed in need of conceptual refinement and theoretical resolution. Most generally, there appeared to be no adequate model of how thought may be socially conditioned, particularly on the microsociological level. More particularly, the crucial role of class in the social conditioning of thought had been widely claimed, but again there lacked a suitable model that would indicate the microsociological connections between 'class' and 'thought'. The aim was thus to develop a refined sociology of knowledge (Part I of the thesis)[1], and to develop within this perspective a general model of the ways in which class may influence thought (Part II).

Although the general approach that was found to be most satisfactory, i.e. methodological individualism, led to a special consideration of Weber's concept of class (outlined in Chapter 5 below)[2], the work of Mannheim and Goldmann[3] was also of particular relevance, for both shared an interest in the role of class in the development of 'world views'. The examination of the concept of 'world view' thus became pertinent, though its analysis went beyond the emphasis upon the cognitive content of perspectives on the world, to encompass a social psychological interest in cognitive style and structure (as discussed in Chapter 6 below). The significance of the work of

1 A condensed account of the approach developed was published in Valentine, 1975.

2 An early statement of the investigation into the relevance of Weber's concept of class for the sociology of knowledge is to be found in Valentine, 1972.

3 A first attempt at a critique of Goldmann's theories in the sociology of knowledge and literature was made in Valentine, 1970.

Mannheim and Goldmann was not restricted to the sociology of knowledge: Mannheim's emphasis on the world view expressed in cultural documents, and Goldmann's particular concern with literary documents, encouraged a link between the sociology of knowledge and the sociology of literature, and prompted an investigation of literature as a special kind of cultural document, with implications for understanding the processes of expression and interpretation of world views in novels (Part III).

Throughout the research it was clear that a case study in the sociology of knowledge and literature was necessary, both for the development of the general concepts and hypotheses, and for the demonstration of their utility in concrete historical explanation. Studies of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, with respect to both their lives and literary works, were thus undertaken.[1] Here it is important to point out that the order of presentation of the thesis was not the order of 'discovery': many aspects of the formal models[2] developed in Parts I - III (e.g., the emphasis on 'work situation' and on 'literary role contacts') derived from the work on Charlotte and Emily Brontë reported in Part IV. Nevertheless, the theoretical and methodological points to be found in the first three Parts cannot all be encompassed within the case studies of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, though these studies both aid and are aided by the development of the formal models. These models however, with their broader relevance, must be seen as the principal contribution of the thesis: they are designed to aid empirical analysis through the indication of what is deemed worth taking into account in investigations of the role of class in the development of world views, and of the expression of

1 Advantages and disadvantages of the selection of Charlotte and Emily Brontë for the empirical research are suggested in the introduction to Part IV.

2 One may either consider the thesis (in Parts I-III) as developing throughout a general model for the sociology of knowledge and literature, with particular reference to 'class', or else as providing a number of formal models of more restricted scope - e.g. of 'class' in Chapter 5, of 'world view' in Chapter 6, of world view development in relation to class in Chapter 7, of the author role in Chapter 8, etc.

world views in literature. Furthermore, the models are intended to prevent certain prevalent assumptions being made in the adoption of theoretical frameworks in the sociology of knowledge and literature - assumptions that are warranted, if at all, only in specific historical contexts.

Where satisfactory solutions to the problems which the thesis had to tackle could not be found in the existing literature, it was of course necessary to transcend existing theories either through the synthesis of perspectives from a variety of writers and disciplines (discussions in various parts of the thesis are drawn from philosophical, sociological, social psychological, historical or literary contexts), or indeed at times through the formulation of new concepts (such as 'promotions' and 'extensions'). However, despite the variety of perspectives considered, a consistent general methodological approach has been developed through the thesis, forming the basis for the research.

### (ii) The General Methodological Approach

The general methodological approach that emerges through the investigation of themes in the sociology of knowledge embraces methodological individualism, which is further elaborated and justified in Chapter 7. More broadly the approach that is developed is consistent with that of Max Weber, in his view of the scope and purpose of sociological knowledge and in his account of conceptualisation and explanation in the social sciences. At the most general level an attempt has been made to put forward formal 'general how' models that indicate, for the investigation of certain general problems, factors that are considered worthwhile taking into account,[1] and the various possible interconnections

[1] Cf. Dray on the status of so-called 'laws' in the social sciences, i.e. laws that:

'... merely summarize a trend, observed in the particular cases, toward the isolation of one sort of condition as/

between these factors.[1] These models are in fact conceptual schemes that are developed under the guidance of certain 'points of view':

> 'In the method of investigation, the guiding 'point of view' is of great importance for the construction of the conceptual scheme which will be used in the investigation.' (Weber, 1949: 84)

The dominant 'point of view' in the thesis has of course been that of the conditioning of world view aspects through class factors. Such general points of view, or 'orientations of our cognitive interest' (Weber, 1949: 64), are not necessarily in themselves evaluative ideas, but, 'however indirectly' (Weber, 1949: 82), 'in the last analysis' (Weber, 1949: 111), must 'ultimately' be related to value-ideas. (Weber, 1949: 112) This means that any conceptual scheme that we develop under the guidance of a general cognitive orientation is merely a 'conceptual game' (Weber, 1949: 92) unless it aids in the analysis of the significance of a particular cultural configuration. This latter is either considered to be effective in conditioning, or is itself, a 'historical individual' that is relevant to our values. (Weber, 1949: 150) From this derives the importance of case studies in the thesis: severe doubt would be thrown upon the value of the general conceptual framework if it were found to be of little use in either the exposition or explanation of value-relevant aspects of the novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë - which does not mean, of course, that the general conceptual framework is claimed to explain all the possible value-relevant aspects, nor all the values to which the novels themselves refer,[2] nor indeed only the

as/
especially noteworthy. ... Such a law can be no more than suggestive in the search for the actual cause; it merely reminds the historian that ... it is worth his while to be on the lookout for this factor as a possible cause.' (1957: 108)

1 The argument for 'general how' models is elaborated below, Chapter 2, pp 63-64

2 The distinction between value-relevance and value-reference is elaborated below, Chapter 11, p 274

economic aspects: the investigation of the economic conditioning of 'historical individuals' does not thereby imply the evaluation of the latter -

> '... for the sake of their economic significance.'
> (Weber, 1949: 151)

Case studies of course involve historical explanations that are either individual (as in this thesis) or collective: both kinds of historical explanation attempt to attain clarity and certainty,

> '... but no matter how clear an interpretation as such appears to be from the point of view of meaning, it cannot on this account claim to be the causally valid interpretation. On this level it must remain only a peculiarly plausible hypothesis.'
> (Weber, 1947: 96-97)

Causal adequacy is achieved through the comparative method (Weber, 1947: 99)[1], and through a process of 'abstraction' that involves both isolation into 'components' and the application to these of generalisations, i.e. 'general empirical rules' that indicate the possibility or probability of the occurrence of certain effects. (Weber, 1949: 173-5) These rules are thus statements of relationships that may obtain between certain elements; many such 'may statements' are included in the formal models of the thesis (e.g., the generalisations on the influence of the audience upon literary expressions, in section (iv) of Chapter 9). These 'may statements' are not -

> '... 'laws' in the narrower exact natural science sense ...' (Weber, 1949: 80),[2]

but rather rules that indicate 'objective possibility'; thus in any individual explanation a 'law' to which one has recourse may be merely -

1 Several of the explanations put forward in the case studies of Charlotte and Emily Brontë attained greater adequacy through a comparative analysis, e.g. of the influence of work situation upon the world view development of each sister.

2 Dray's comments on so-called 'laws' in the social sciences are once again relevant here: see the footnote on p 6 above.

> '... a regularly recurrent causal relationship of everyday experience ...' (Weber, 1949: 80)

Scriven has termed such general rules 'normic statements', and has indicated their crucial role in historical explanations. 'Normic statements' are those generalisations for which one is unable to specify all the conditions: they -

> '... are useful where the system of exceptions, although perfectly comprehensible in the sense that one can learn how to judge their relevance, is exceedingly complex.' (1959: 466)

For both individual and collective historical explanations, however, causal adequacy is not sufficient: a relationship remains an incomprehensible probability if adequacy in respect to meaning is lacking. (Weber, 1947: 99) Meaningful adequacy is achieved through the 'rational understanding of motivation' (Weber, 1947: 95), which entails a sociological account of motivated action in rational terms, as incorporated in ideal-typical actor models.[1]

> 'The ideal-type of meaningful action where the meaning is fully conscious and explicit ...' (Weber, 1947: 112),

may well be a marginal case, but this need not prevent the sociologist from reasoning -

> '... as if action actually proceeded on the basis of clearly self-conscious meaning.' (Weber, 1947: 112)

The final section of this introductory chapter develops for the analysis of action a conceptual framework that is basic to a sociology of knowledge and literature that claims to attain meaningful adequacy.

### (iii) A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of Action

This section aims to construct a schema which includes rational action-orientation, in terms of ends or values, as well as taking

[1] The argument for ideal-typical analysis in terms of rational constructs is expounded in detail below, Chapter 7, p 160 ff

account of 'sentimental action' and its potentially rational form in sociological explanation. Although traditional and other non-logical forms of motive-action relationship are discussed for the sake of completeness, they play a relatively minor role in the thesis, which emphasises the construction of rational models.[1] The action schema is developed through a comparison of the work of Weber and Pareto, as suggested by Sahay (1972: Chapter 4), who also introduces the notion of 'sociological rationality'[2] that is of considerable significance throughout the thesis. The comparison of Weber and Pareto commences with a study of Pareto's analysis of non-logical action.

Pareto is primarily concerned with one link in the general social process, the link between sentiment, belief and action. The fact that his analysis is of a development from motivational force to social act does not make his system psychologistic, as some critics have maintained, as he does not claim for sentiments an ultimate status as final determinants.[3] His formulation is indeed a 'general how' model, a picture of how certain general elements in society relate; though his classification of residues does indicate certain common causes he believes to operate.

Pareto is particularly interested in the explanation of action which does not follow from the rational pursuit of an end or value, but which involves an interpretation by the actor which is in effect a rationalisation. (Pareto, 1966: 184-5) In Pareto's model of non-logical action, the emphasis is upon the role of sentiments in bringing about both the belief/rationalisation and the action. The key concept

1 The role of these models in sociological explanation is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7, pp 160-163 below.

2 Sahay, 1972: 46ff, 106ff & 174-5.

3 Sahay makes a similar point - 1972: 52.

in his theory, however, is that of 'residue', thus called since that is what remains when various actions and interpretations of action are examined for their constant elements, beliefs in their individuality being then seen as 'derivations' therefrom. (Pareto, 1966: 210 & 216) Residues, as manifestations of sentiments, are capable of more objective observation than the sentiments which underlie them (Pareto, 1966: 217): Sahay sees them as -

> '... persistent associations of ideas, acts and things ...' (1972: 81),

and Pareto's own Class I in the Classification of Residues indicates that they refer to associations of ideas, ideas and things, or ideas and action. (Pareto, 1966: 222) Pareto certainly grants them a status more akin to observables than are the sentiments manifested in them. It is for this reason that we must reject B. Berger's view of residues as equivalent to pre-theoretical consciousness (1967: 272): this latter would include, in addition to the mental associations of idea and action means and end, etc., many of the sentiments that Pareto sees as manifested in such associations. Residues are certainly pre-theoretical (because assumed, and subject to various theoretical legitimations = derivations), but they do not exhaust the field of pre-theoretical consciousness. Sentiments however may validly be viewed as elements of pre-theoretical consciousness: they do not have to be seen either as meaningless drives (as in Scheler) or as conscious values - a sentiment may contain certain conceptual elements without being formulated into a conscious value.

Whilst Pareto is right to work back from the observable to the meaningful in the explanation of action, one may question whether residues really help in this: since the relation to sentiments is not adequately defined, and since the residues are formulated on such a high level of generality, they might appear to be mere arbitrary

classifications. Finer points out that Pareto is not interested in states of mind as such (1966: 36); and indeed this is revealed by the fact that Pareto does not go beyond the description of sentiments as being 'manifested' in residues. If the relationship is left as vague as this, we have no reason to believe that residues, i.e. what is found to be common to various non-logical actions, are related to 'highly permanent psychic states' (Finer, 1966: 38): they may each be related to manifold and varying psychic states, in which case it would seem that Pareto's residues would be unable to deal with the variety of meanings in non-logical action. It thus becomes clear that sentiments as determinants of action and belief cannot be ignored or merely subsumed under their 'manifestations' in a limited number of residues. The interpretation of an action as motivated by a sentiment is as capable of objective validity as an interpretation which suggests that the action follows logically from an end or value: without the rule of logic applying in the former case, however, the relation between sentiment and action must be validated either through subsumption under a different type of rule, pertaining for instance to normal occurrence in the culture concerned; or through comparison with a rationalised ideal-type of sentiment-action relationship. Through this process one may explain the correlation of observables in the residue.

Having argued for a greater consideration of sentiments than is advocated by Pareto, and yet for a retention of the role of residues at an intermediary level of analysis, one may ask what one is to do if unable to go beyond this intermediary stage, due to there being no obvious rule under which to subsume the residue (e.g. where it is not clear which of a variety of sentiments may plausibly explain the existence of the residue in the situation). Here the true value of Pareto's concept of residues emerges: where it is not possible to trace a non-

logical action to sentiments, a principle governing this action, a persistent tendency of human thought and action, may nevertheless be discovered, this being what Pareto would term the residue. It is the fact that this tendency (rather than another) is present which may account for the occurrence of this particular action or belief. In this way residues may be seen to have explanatory value, and thus are not necessarily limited to a capacity for labelling.

If we thus distinguish carefully between residue and sentiment, we see that sentiment may itself be a motivation for action, whilst residue refers not to motivation but to a non-logical combination of observable elements of action or belief: an 'association-tendency'. The concept of residue may further be broadened to include not only the non-logical combination of observables, but also non-logical associations of motivation and action. In this way, if ideal-typical comparison reveals that an action is not solely the result of sentiments, an association-tendency may be invoked to account for the sentiment-action relationship. Pareto's notion of residues as manifestations of sentiments is thus criticised, as it confuses the persistent tendencies of thought and conduct with motivation or meaning expressed. Certainly not all residues manifest sentiments (e.g. traditional actions do not always involve sentimental motivation); and, as Pareto would agree (1966: 217), not all sentiments are manifested in residues: they may directly motivate thought and conduct without necessarily involving general human or traditional association-tendencies.

Our insistence on a careful distinction between residues and sentiments, in order to be able to gain a clearer view of their relationship and of their utility for the explanation of action and belief, is further justified if we study Pareto's Classification of Residues. (Pareto, 1966: 222-3) Residues Classes I and II would seem to be concerned primarily

with association-tendencies, indicating the power of both general human combinations and tradition; whilst Class IIIa seems to be actually the tendency to make associations at all, i.e. a human nature universal. The other Classes of Residues would appear to fall into the category of 'sentiments as explanations of action' - i.e. they are concerned with the emotional content of conduct and belief.

It is interesting at this point to outline Weber's framework for the analysis of action, as this framework appears to be complementary to that of Pareto.[1] Weber analyses action in terms of its mode of orientation, and formulates four different types of action-orientation: end-rational, value-rational, affective and traditional. (1947: 115) The first three types are motivated by ends, values and emotions respectively, where motive refers to a meaningful subjective source of action. (1947: 95-96) End- and value-motivated action are termed rational in the ideal-type, since if these are the sole subjective determinants of the action, then their relationship to the action must be rational (either in terms of a logical means-end relationship, or in terms of the logical coherence of the action with the value therein expressed), as otherwise elements of sentiment, tradition, etc., would be involved. The distinction between end-rational and value-rational action, then, rests upon whether the orientation is in terms of efficiency/instrumentality, or in terms of the logical expression of an absolute value. However, as Parsons points out (Weber, 1947: 115 footnote), Weber's empirical analyses of value-oriented action retain the notion of value as an ultimate end, but not necessarily as absolute: consideration of consequences in a situation of competing values is thus not excluded. Furthermore, an orientation akin to end-rationality may be maintained towards values, in that certain values (e.g. salvation) may be capable of at least subjective

[1] This point is argued with force by Sahay, 1972: Chapter 4.

achievement by action (as a means) rather than in action (as expression). Affective action, of course, does not derive rationally from a conscious end or value: it may, however, be possible to formulate the 'affects and states of feeling' (1947: 115) concerned in terms of conscious ends or values and thus to assess their influence through the use of ideal-types: this would be to apply 'sociological rationality'[1] to a non-logical motive-action connection. Where this connection obtains through tradition, however, Weber would term the action 'traditional', referring to the form of the action. An action may also be traditional through its motivational content, where the action is oriented to tradition itself, tradition here being a specific sentiment or value for the actor. In any case a behaviour must involve more than mere habit (in the case of tradition) or mere reaction to stimulus (in the case of affective action) to be included as meaningful action. (Weber, 1947: 116) Furthermore, one must remember that Weber is concerned here with ideal-types of action: in practice, for instance, an action prompted by a consciously formulated value may lack complete rationality through its modification by elements of tradition. The following table summarises Weber's ideal-types of action:

| Type of Action | Orientation Towards | Motive-Action Connection |
|---|---|---|
| end-rational | end | rational (means-end |
| value-rational | value | logical (expression) |
| affective | sentiment | non-logical |
| traditional | tradition | traditional |

It is interesting to note that there is a necessary relation between orientation and motive-action connection in all the types of action apart from the traditional. If the connection is rational means-end, the orientation must be towards an end; if logical expression, the orien-

[1] See Sahay, 1972: 46ff; and Weber, 1947: 112.

tation must be towards a value; if the orientation is towards a sentiment, the connection must be non-logical; but if tradition is the motive, then it may act as a sentiment or value, and the connection be non-logical or logical without necessarily being traditional; and if the connection is traditional, the traditional form of the action may be maintained unthinkingly, and the motivation be unrelated to tradition. Thus for instance the action might be sentimental with traditional form. While orientation towards tradition will frequently be of significance in maintaining traditional form, the latter is nevertheless distinct from the former, and it may be argued that tradition as a motive is best seen as a specific kind of sentiment or value, thus leaving three types of action-orientation, and tradition as a particular type of non-logical action-motive connection.

We are now in a position to compare Weber's analysis of action with that of Pareto. Pareto's twofold distinction between logical and non-logical action would correspond to end-rational action on the one hand, with the other three types of action falling into the non-logical category on the other hand (Sahay, 1972: 103), logical for Pareto here referring to logico-experimental. (Pareto, 1966: 169 & 184) Pareto does not deny the possibility of value-rational action, but is sceptical of claims for its importance in society: he would tend to look carefully at the value to see if it was a rationalisation for an unstated residue or sentiment. (1966: 185) As for affective action, Pareto is not directly interested in this, except insofar as sentiments influence action indirectly through residues. Perhaps the most interesting comparison here is of Weber's traditional action with Pareto's residues. Pareto's concept of residues does not refer only to <u>traditional</u> associations of conduct and belief, action and motivation, etc., but also to more general human association-tendencies. Furthermore, for

Pareto it is irrelevant whether the motivation concerned is connected with tradition or not, or even whether it is known. The difference in emphasis derives from Weber's interest in the motivation for the action (thus his interest in tradition as a motive); and Pareto's explicit lack of interest in the 'states of mind' behind the residues he finds: for him it is sufficient to reach the objectively observable residues (thus his interest in tradition as fact rather than in related motives).

Thus if we combine Weber and Pareto in a typology of action-orientations, we emerge with end-rational, value-rational and sentimental action, Weber going beyond Pareto in this last type in indicating not only the possibility of action arising directly from meaningful sentiment, but also the possibility of applying sociological rationality to assess the influence of such sentiments. 'Traditional' orientation becomes subsumed under sentiments or values; whilst the 'traditional form' in Weber's category of traditional action becomes part of a broader concept of 'association-tendencies' developed from Pareto's discussion of residues. Thus if the action does not derive solely from end, value or sentiment, then one must take account of traditional or general human association-tendencies in the explanation of the motive-action relationship.[1]

(iv) Summary

This chapter has indicated the way in which the theme of the thesis developed, making it clear that the order of presentation of the thesis is not the order in which the research was undertaken. The mutual support of formal models and case studies was stressed, and indication was given

[1] Similarly, if one is not able to ascertain the motivation, one may be able to invoke a residual category of 'action-tendency', which may be used (as Pareto uses residues) in the explanation of aspects of a society. Since Pareto is not directly interested in the actor's motivation, he would not distinguish in his concept of residues between: a) the explanation of the form of an action (with known motivation) through association-tendency; and b) the explanation of aspects of a society through prevalent action-tendencies (without known motivation) in that society.

of the scope of sociology, comprising formal models, 'normic statements' and collective and individual historical explanations. The exposition of the general methodological approach, consistent with that of Max Weber, clarified the purpose of conceptual schemes developed under the guidance of a general cognitive orientation, and emphasised the importance of both causal and meaningful adequacy in sociological explanation in terms of action. Finally, a conceptual framework for the analysis of action was developed through a comparison of the work of Weber and Pareto. This framework, stressing the importance of sentiments, values, ends and means in meaningfully adequate sociological explanation, indicated the significance of sociological rationality as a means of understanding non-logical connections of motive and action.

# P A R T  I : SUBSTRUCTURE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

## INTRODUCTION TO PART I

In the following three chapters we shall examine theories in the sociology of knowledge, in order to provide a foundation for our enquiry into the role of class in the conditioning of thought. Apart from gaining useful insights from these theories, we shall attempt to show their limitations, which will indicate the directions in which the subsequent enquiry should be pursued.

A study of theories in the sociology of knowledge will involve comparing them with respect to; the sort of thought they are concerned with; which aspects of society they are attempting to relate to thought; how, why and to what degree society comes, in their view, to influence thought. One of the ideas most commonly met with in the sociology of knowledge is that of a substructure of social factors influencing in some way a superstructure of ideas, thought, knowledge or whatever. The substructure is frequently so called because it is considered to be a complex of factors more static and more determinant than the superstructure. The substructure/superstructure distinction may however be used profitably in our examination of various theories in the sociology of knowledge, in order to reveal certain common or contrasting themes; for wherever one wishes to analyse the effect of one set of factors on another, this dichotomy may be used, without assuming it to be more than analytical, and without necessarily reifying the particular perspective on social reality by fixing the substructure/superstructure characterisation for all social enquiry.

Part I thus begins with an investigation of conceptions of the substructure in the sociology of knowledge (Chapter 2); Chapter 3 concentrates on views of the superstructure; and Chapter 4 tackles some question concerning the relationship between substructure and superstructure. Given

the analytical nature of the distinction between substructure and superstructure, certain issues in Chapters 3 and 4 are inevitably encountered earlier in Chapter 2.

Within the sociology of knowledge the substructure should not necessarily be taken to refer to the whole of society, but rather it may refer to a particular set of social factors, such as those associated with the concept of class. In the three chapters of Part I, we shall of course deal with concepts of class and thought, but principally within the theories of sociologists of knowledge. Concepts of class and thought will be more thoroughly considered in Part II, where reference will be made to theorists outside the field of the sociology of knowledge. In Part I we are thus concerned with a general appraisal of the sociology of knowledge, though naturally our interest will be directed towards those areas that are likely to prove most relevant to our subsequent enquiry into the development of thought in relation to class factors.

## CHAPTER 2: SUBSTRUCTURE IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

### (i) Meaning in the Substructure

In examining the characterisations of the substructure in the sociology of knowledge, one of the first questions to arise is the extent to which the identification of the superstructure with 'knowledge' precludes the inclusion of meaning in the substructure. As an example of one extreme standpoint on this matter, Max Scheler's theories spring to mind. For Scheler, the 'real' and the 'ideal' represent the substructure and superstructure, and the former partakes not at all of the latter:

> 'The distinction between the two spheres is not merely methodological but ontological.'
> (Becker and Dahlke, 1942: 312)

Scheler's 'real forces' consist of the fundamental drive structure ('Triebstruktur') of society and its social corollaries, the institutions in which the drive structure is expressed. (Scheler, 1960: 19) These basic impulses are 'blind', and need the guiding help of 'spirit', from which they select the ideas (powerless in themselves) which will enable them to achieve their ends. (Scheler, 1960: 40) This, at least, is Scheler's theory at its simplest, and it is this schema which has evoked the strong criticisms of his ideal/real dichotomy: Stark for instance questions how a mindless movement can relate to eternal ideas; if the fundamental drives are really blind, then how can they select the appropriate ideas? (1958: 264)

Despite these rather crude formulations, Scheler is concerned elsewhere to claim that the real and the ideal are analytical elements of society, and that society cannot be taken as the real concretely opposed to the ideal. This is illustrated in the following passage:

> "... knowledge of members of a group of each other and the possibility of their 'understanding' of each other is not an element which is added to a social group, but co-constitutes the object 'human society'. ... Furthermore, there belongs to any 'group' a knowledge, however vague, of its own existence, as well as commonly recognised values and aims." (Scheler, 1970b: 170)

The very existence (Dasein) of society thus implies knowledge of some kind. This low-level, common, taken-for-granted knowledge is termed by Scheler the 'group-soul', expressed in such as myth, folk-language, folk-song, folk-religion, custom, tradition, etc. (1970b: 172-3), and whose lowest centre is the relative natural world view (1970b: 177-8). But for Scheler the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the group-mind rather than the group-soul (1970b: 180), the former being concerned with more conscious and abstract expressions of intellect: Scheler indeed gives a list of forms of knowledge of increasing artificiality (and hence more abstracted from the group-soul) ending in scientific and technical knowledge. (1970b: 178-9)

Scheler's emphasis on the real and seemingly non-meaningful drives as the principal forces in his model of society and knowledge might lead one to accuse him of lacking an adequate conception of meaningful motivation. Scheler can to some extent be defended against this criticism by pointing to his concepts of group-soul and relative natural world-view, which are clearly part of the substructure as compared with a superstructure of more 'artificial' knowledge; and indeed in his analysis of the role of the elite in influencing society's knowledge, his emphasis on the role of the 'herrschende soziale Interessenperspektive' (ruling social interest perspective), which seems to be a relatively conscious manifestation of the drive structure of society, and on the prevailing cultural ethos (another term for group-soul?) in which the interest perspective is reflected (Staude, 1967: 177), indicate Scheler's recognition of a more complex relationship of meaning and motivation than his

cruder formulations on the blind power of the social drive structure would imply.

When reviewing Scheler's work, Mannheim notes that Scheler's distinction between the 'ideal' and 'real' factors in the situation is very similar to Marx's distinction between the superstructure and substructure, except that for the former the substructure consists of psychological factors (drives) rather than socio-economic ones. (1952: 156-7) Mannheim is concerned to point out that many factors classified as 'real' by Scheler and by certain variants of Marxism, are by no means completely devoid of meaning and purely 'material'. He gives as an example the economy:

> '... the physiology of the hunger drive belongs to mere 'nature', but ... this physiological substratum constitutes an element of the historic process only in so far as it enters into mental configurations, for example by assuming the form of an economic order or some other institutional form. ... The (hunger) drive as such remains essentially unchanged over time, whereas economic institutions undergo constant changes, and history is exclusively interested in these institutional changes. That excess over and above the physiological substratum which alone transforms the drive into a historical factor is already 'mind'. It is, therefore, not enough to say that economy would not exist without mind; it should be added that it is this mental element which makes economy out of mere drive-satisfaction. If, then, we constantly lower the limit of the 'natural' by refining our distinctions, so that the 'economic' turns out to be 'mental' rather than 'material', then we must recognise two 'mental' spheres, the mutual relationship of which is that of substructure and superstructure. The question will then be how one sphere affects the other in the total process ...'
>
> (Mannheim, 1952: 162-3)

While we endorse Mannheim's emphasis on the mental aspects of the substructure, and though it is clear that some of the formulations of Scheler and Marx lend themselves to naive materialist interpretations, we have nevertheless already seen how Scheler, where more careful and concrete, is able to take account of meaningful elements in the substructure. To what extent is Mannheim's critique applicable to Marx?

In places, Marx clearly writes in such a way as to warrant criticism for naive materialism. His famous statement in the Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy posits the mode of production of material life, including the material powers of production and their corresponding social relations of production, as constituting the substructure, whilst upon this foundation arises the corresponding ideological superstructure. Yet Marx's implicit sociology of knowledge has attracted many interpretations, even of single sentences such as-

> 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness.'
> (1956: 51)

Neisser has criticised Marx for failing to recognise that knowledge itself is contained as a presupposition in the social factors that affect and possibly determine knowledge, the obvious example being the involvement of technology in the development of the material factors of production. (1965: 27) But Avineri suggests that Marx's distinction between a substructure of 'social being' and a superstructure of 'consciousness' is not a distinction between material and cognitive factors,

> '... but between conscious human activity, aimed at the creation and preservation of the conditions of human life, and human consciousness, which furnishes reasons, rationalisations and modes of legitimization and moral justification for the specific forms that activity takes.'
> (1968: 76)

To be fair to Marx, the 'ideological superstructure' is aptly called ideological: Marx is not concerned to show that consciousness in its broadest sense is substructurally determined and powerless; but, like Pareto, he is a cynic where grand moral motives and explanations of action are put forward. When Marx says, most broadly, that social being determines consciousness, it thus seems likely that he means that a particular type of social being including consciousness (i.e. the mode

of production of material life) determines[1] the rest of social being and more removed ideological consciousness.

It therefore appears that even Marx and Scheler, who are often thought of as representing an extreme view of a non-meaningful substructure, may be found to posit a substructure involving consciousness, and thus escape Mannheim's criticism. Mannheim is not the only theorist to emphasise the meaningful nature of the substructure, however: Stark puts forward a substructure of meaningful interaction (1958: 253); and in similar vein, but at greater length, Berger and Luckmann (1967) describe the base social reality as the 'everyday commonsense world', following Schutz. Berger and Luckmann indeed have a wider conception of the sociology of knowledge than is usual, so wide in fact that it appears to encompass the whole field of meaningful social action. Although they do not use the terms, if 'substructure' and 'superstructure' were used they would refer to the everyday commonsense world including everyday pragmatic knowledge (substructure) (1967: 56) and the various abstractions from and legitimations of this world (superstructure). (1967: 110-122) However, Berger and Luckmann are concerned to point out the various differentiations of the socio-meaningful world, in terms of shared role-typologies (1967: 91), 'finite provinces of meaning' (1967: 39), etc.; and differentiation by knowledge (including the social organisation of theoretical experts) (1967: 134ff) and by power (including the power to impose definitions of reality) (1967: 139ff) is given prominence in accounting for the superstructure. Thus although a shared and harmonious base reality of a commonsense world is the foundation for abstractions and legitimations, aspects of social differentiation (whose elements are by definition not shared equally by

[1] Sayer, however, suggests that Marxian substructure should be seen as analytical rather than substantive: the mode of production has only a methodological primacy for Marx, as its actual primacy cannot be assumed a priori. (Sayer, 1975: Chap. 1)

the whole society, even though knowledge of the differentiation may be shared) and mental differentiation ('finite provinces of meaning') must clearly enter into the substructure. For Berger and Luckmann, therefore, knowledge is very much a part of the substructure, both in terms of the meaning involved in everyday social life and more circumscribed enclaves of meaning, and in terms of the organisation of knowledge in society.

It is to be hoped that the above discussion has rendered untenable the belief that the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the relationship between a material substructure and a superstructure of meaning. A meaningful substructure, however, may still lack reference to individual goals and experiences: abstract ideas may simply be said to reflect a broad social reality. Most theorists however include motivational elements in their analyses: motivation is seen as influencing the content or adoption of ideas, or merely as acting on a substructure devoid of motivational elements. Scheler, for instance, emphasises the 'drive structure' of society (in particular that of the elite) and its expression in a correlated social structure, as the 'real factors' which determine the adoption of ideas (Becker and Dahlke, 1942: 317). Although, as we pointed out earlier, Scheler sees the drive structure as manifested consciously in the ruling social interest perspective, (Scheler, 1970b: 175), there is no analysis of the process by which the drives become conscious, and the drives themselves are certainly blind meaningless forces. Scheler's 'Triebstruktur' appears to operate with considerable uniformity throughout a given society, and without reference to the meanings of particular actors. An emphasis on motivational elements thus does not guarantee an analysis of meaning; nor does it guarantee that the analysis can be readily applied to the case of an individual in a situation. For a schema which places just as much emphasis on motivational elements, but which avoids Scheler's cruder formulations, we must return to the work of Pareto.

(ii) Motivational Elements in the Substructure: Pareto

For a meaningful analysis of the individual in the situation, the sociology of knowledge requires an adequate conception of action in the substructure, and, as we have seen in Chapter 1, Pareto's analysis of non-logical action would indicate the place of motivational elements within such a conception: his concepts of residues and sentiments have worthwhile implications for the study of action and motivation, and hence for the specification of the substructure in the sociology of knowledge. In his concern with beliefs and interpretations non-logically related to the action they purport to explain, Pareto contributes to the analysis of the superstructure and of the substructure-superstructure relationship.

It is indeed Pareto, perhaps more than any other theorist, who emphasises the non-logical aspects of action and belief. It is true that he stresses the importance of interests, the rational pursuit of concrete ends (1966: 260); but most of his research is devoted to the influence of residues and sentiments. His viewpoint is embodied in the very concept 'derivation', which refers to a rationalisation purporting to account for an action, while both it and the action derive from some prior residue or sentiment. According to Pareto, although most action is non-logical, man has an innate desire to give his action a semblance of logic, and this he does in the interpretations of action which are in fact rationalisations. (1966: 210) Most of man's beliefs (and thus most of the superstructure for Pareto) are derivations of this kind, the substructure consisting of actions and their sources (primarily residues and sentiments) and social differentiation, especially with respect to residues (the residues of the elite are of particular significance). (1966: 260-263)

Pareto advocates a threefold analysis of theories/ideas/beliefs. (1966: 169-70) First the theory is examined according to its objective truth status. If the objective analysis reveals non-logicality, then a subjective analysis becomes necessary: i.e., we must explain how the individual has come to formulate or accept the theory. This will involve establishing the prior residue or sentiment which the derivation expresses, or the residue or sentimental action which it rationalises, and then investigating why this expression/rationalisation was chosen rather than another. Pareto's third mode of analysis, according to the theory's utility, indicates an important class of reasons for the adoption of one derivation rather than another, i.e. its utility for the actor's subjective ends. This utility may consist of its effectiveness in expressing/rationalising the residue/sentiment/sentimental action, or in serving other unrelated ends of the actor. This latter possibility leads one to make a similar observation that there may be more sentiments involved in the adoption of an idea than in the existence of the residue or sentimental action it attempts to rationalise: i.e., sentiments are involved in the rationalisation itself, both in the very need to rationalise and in the sentiments the rationalisation appeals to, which may well differ from those involved in the action it rationalises. Thus through his observation that a single residue/sentiment may lead to a multitude of different derivations (1966: 187), Pareto opens the way for the use of the concepts of residue, sentiment and utility in the explanation of why any particular derivation of the many possible is adopted. Furthermore, a derivation whose origin was in the expression or rationalisation of a residue, for instance, may outlive its original function through its utility in supporting quite unrelated ends.

Through his threefold method of analysis of ideas, then, Pareto teaches us to avoid taking beliefs at their face value, since they may

be merely expressions or rationalisations of more basic residues, etc., or may be remnants of the past persisting for their extrinsic validity: his concepts of sentiments, residues and utility clearly aid in the explanation of the formulation, acceptance and persistence of such ideas. Residues, as we have seen in Chapter 1,[1] may act not only as an intermediary stage (of analysis of observables) in the explanation of ideas, but also as a conditioning factor in their own right. 'Utility', whilst indicating important sources of the adoption and maintenance of derivations, must not however be thought to operate in a vacuum: the principle of utility works within a context, such as the audience for the derivation, the differential 'availability' of various derivations to the actor, and the generally accepted modes of expression/rationalisation.[2]

Scheler and Pareto are both concerned with the role of motivational elements in the adoption of ideas. We have seen, however, in this section and in Chapter 1, how Pareto goes beyond Scheler in the complex analysis of the relations between motivation, action and belief; how his theory does not suffer from the philosophical premise that renders Scheler's drives blind and meaningless; and how his analysis is applicable to the individual in the situation. Nevertheless Pareto's theory would benefit from a fuller treatment of the relationship between the actor's motivation and his conditions of action, his social situation, etc., so that for instance full account would be taken of the social context within which the principle of utility operates. Scheler of course attempts to relate psychological and social factors in his conception of the drive structure

1 See above, pp 12-13

2 This point is developed in Chapter 9, p 216 below. Pareto is not, however, unaware of conventions in rationalisation: 'Logical interpretations assume the forms which are most commonly current in the epoch in which they are evolved.' (1966: 187)

and its social corrollaries; but this is to correlate rather than to relate. Many theorists have attemped to relate situation and motive through the concept of interests, a concept which Scheler and Pareto both emphasise rather than explore. Pareto's concern with rationalisations and utility, however, reveals the importance he places upon interests in the sense of conscious subjective ends which theories may rationalise in an acceptable manner (e.g. appealing to sentiments) or usefully promote. His primary concern, however, is with sentiments and residues, and it is to other theorists, and in particular to Mannheim, that we must turn for a fuller treatment of the role of interests in the sociology of knowledge.

(iii) Motivational Elements in the Substructure: Mannheim

Mannheim's attempts to relate motivation and social situation form part of his interest in the relationship between social strata and their thought. The most frequently found formulation of this relationship in Mannheim is that each group, being involved in the social structure in a different way, will come to see only those aspects of the social world with which it is concerned: this may be called the perspective of the group. Similarly, since each individual is involved in the group's activities in a different manner, each will have his own perspective, his own view of the common world of the group. (1936: 26) It is on this basis that Mannheim builds up various motivational theories of the social determination of thought. The one associated most closely with the 'perspective' relationship between thought and society is the pragmatic view of 'knowledge':

> '... not every possible aspect of the world comes within the purview of the members of a group, but only those out of which difficulties and problems for the group arise.' (1936: 26)

Here cognition is seen as an instrument with which to deal with certain problems: a group shares certain goals and thus must come to solutions as to how to realise them. The activity which implements a goal requires a minimum of knowledge essential to carrying out this activity. This knowledge is therefore pragmatically determined, and is at the same time a perspective on the world.

It can easily be seen that Mannheim's conception of the perspective of a group being pragmatically determined is only meaningful if we see the 'problem' (which necessitates the knowledge) as deriving from the goals or 'subjective interests' of the group in question: without such interests the group would have no such problems to solve. Thus 'interests' in this sense are at the very heart of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. Such indirect determination by interests, however, must not be confused with the case of direct 'interestedness', as where an individual or group consciously adopts or formulates an intellectual standpoint because it is in accordance with his/its perceived interests. (1952: 183) This, then, is the second type of relationship which Mannheim postulates between social strata and their thought, and this type Mannheim sees as being of little interest to the sociology of knowledge, since it comes more within the sphere of ideology in the narrow sense of conscious misrepresentation. (1936: 238-9)

To contrast with this second type, Mannheim formulates a third type of relationship, 'committedness', which is essentially a more complex version of the first type, and which may be seen as a link between his notion of perspective and the concepts of ideology and utopia:[1]

[1] This point is elaborated below (Chapter 4, pp 94-95) in the context of a discussion of Mannheim's emphasis on a historical perspective in the sociology of knowledge.

> '... those who seek a certain economic order also seek the intellectual outlook correlated with it. When a group is directly interested in an economic system, then it is also indirectly 'committed' to the other intellectual, artistic, philosphical, etc. forms corresponding to that economic system. Thus indirect 'committedness' to certain mental forms is the most comprehensive category in the field of the social conditioning of ideas.'
> (1952: 183-4)

This third type of relationship, then, may be seen as involving a group realising that a certain system of actions is necessary to achieve its goals, and (unconsciously) adopting a system of thought which corresponds to this system of actions. (We use the term 'system of actions' intentionally, in order to leave open the exact nature of the activities which the group sees as achieving its goals: the 'system of actions' may then be anything from merely one or two relatively unrelated activities to a whole economic or social system). The group thus becomes committed both to the system of actions and to the corresponding ideas.

Further complexity in the relations of a group's interests, actions and ideas is revealed by the Marxian concept of ideological power. Whilst Mannheim does not deal explicitly with this, he does at times write of a dominant Weltanschauung and the 'Weltanschauung of an epoch' - e.g. 1952: 33ff; and -

> '... it may happen ... that one of these currents (which divide every epoch) achieves dominance and relegates the others to the status of under-currents."
> (1952: 181)

Mannheim does not clarify the role of interests or commitment in situations of ideological domination; but we can infer that ideological power enables one to impose one's own Weltanschauung on others and to provide for them certain legitimations, which may, for instance, correspond to an activity which one wishes them to perform. One may even be able to persuade them that this activity (which is in one's own subjec-

tive interest) is in their own interest. One may be conscious/unconscious of promoting the ideas and legitimations corresponding to a desired system of actions to be enacted by another group; and one may be conscious/unconscious that such promotion serves one's own interests. Consciousness of this second type would constitute direct determination of ideas by interests, while both of the other possibilities we distinguish (consciousness or otherwise of promoting ideas which, although one is unconscious of the fact, promote's one's own interests) are more adequately accounted for by the concept of 'commitment'.

We have seen how indirect determination of ideas by interests is implied in the pragmatism involved in the 'perspective' and 'commitment' relationships between social strata and their thought. Some theorists however posit a social determination of the interests themselves, in which interests derive automatically from social situation. To clarify our position on this issue, it is necessary to consider which factors condition a group's perception of its interests. Of course, 'interests' is itself an ambiguous concept: it may refer to an actor's concrete ends, or more narrowly to what will be of 'benefit' to the actor, either in the actor's or someone else's view. In its association with the actor's perspective and commitment, as in Mannheim's work, 'interests' is used more broadly to include values and sentiments as well as ends. As for the determination of interests, we do not believe it is possible to formulate a general ahistorical theory to account for interest formation, and thus we deny the validity of conceptions of 'objective interests' and hence of false consciousness.[1] Mannheim does not free himself entirely of the charge that he subscribes to a notion of objective interests, though he neither explicitly accepts nor rejects this notion:

[1] For discussion of a view of false consciousness less closely linked to a concept of 'true interests', see the critique of Goldmann's conception of consciousness, p 48 below.

one may only infer it from various passages in his writings, e.g.:

> 'A group whose class position is more or less definitely fixed already has its political viewpoint decided for it.' (1936: 143)

At any rate, it is important to clarify our own position on objective interests and false consciousness, whatever stand Mannheim takes on this matter.

The concept of 'false consciousness', insofar as it does not merely entail one's own judgements of how people ought to think, involves a theory of the interests which would 'naturally' develop from a certain social position; yet this implies some kind of universal theory of human motivation, such as 'individuals will always attempt to obtain and maintain a position of economic power, as long as the formation of their interests in such positions is not prevented through ideological manipulation'. Such a statement is unsatisfactory in three respects:-

a) Insofar as the theory can be refuted by empirical evidence, we must note that it is an overgeneralisation, since it cannot, for instance, account for individuals having economic power and giving it up in order to satisfy another need (e.g., in becoming a monk).

b) The theory does not differentiate between the desire for economic power as an end in itself and as a means of fulfilling other ends. It is largely as a means towards other ends that economic power is sought, since it is a form of power that has great flexibility of application. Moreover, the theory fails to recognise that certain ends can be attained without achieving a position of great economic power, and might even be hindered by achieving such a position.

c) The theory does not differentiate between different means of obtaining economic power. In certain versions of Marxism,[1] a member

[1] For example, see the discussion of Goldmann, p 43 below

of the proletariat is considered to be suffering from false consciousness if he is not conscious of his shared economic position with the rest of the proletariat and if he does not feel a desire to strive in common with the proletariat for greater economic power. Yet the worker may possess another means of obtaining economic power: upward social mobility out of the proletariat rather than with the proletariat. If this is the worker's aim, the theory of false consciousness would find it difficult to label it either true or false consciousness, since only one form of true consciousness is allowed for the working class: yet the notion of false consciousness, insofar as it implies more than just a value-judgement, must be based on an assumed universal human motivation for economic power, according to which a motivation towards individual upward social mobility on the part of the worker would be considered to be one form of true consciousness.

There are three possible reasons why a Marxist conception of false consciousness fails to stand up to this third criticism:

1) The possibility (of realistic individual ambition in the proletariat) is thought to be insignificant: social mobility is considered to be a rarely available option.

2) The possibility is thought to be irrelevant because individuals are considered only in terms of their class membership and role in the class struggle.

3) The notion of false consciousness is only a value-judgement after all.

Whichever of these reasons apply, we should contend that the concept of false consciousness is misleading in sociology, either because of its value-assumptions of because of the inadequacies associated with it if it implies, more than a value-judgement, a theory of universal human

motivation. If we wish to give an objective account of the factors conditioning the subjective interests of an individual or group, we should look for all the factors in the concrete historical situation which influenced the formation of the interests, rather than making assumptions associated with conceptions as to what constitutes 'true' or 'false' consciousness.

In 'Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge', 'Ideology and Utopia' and the later 'Essays on the Sociology of Culture',[1] Mannheim lapses at times into a mechanistic, over-deterministic point of view, in which, for instance, he implies the existence of the objective interests of a group. The over-deterministic attitude is, however, far less apparent in 'Essays on the Sociology of Culture', as is seen by his emphasis on the alternatives for individual action present in a given social situation:

> '(One malady) is the temptation to hypostatize ex post facto the inner necessity of a past turn of events without prior examination of the alternative solutions which were potential in one phase or another of the development.' (1956: 87)

> 'The term 'positional orientation' must not be construed deterministically, since a given position permits more than one type of reaction.' (1956: 107)

Although these admirable statements do not prevent him from making over-deterministic assertions about what intellectuals will do in given situations (see 1956: Part Two), there is clearly a trend in Mannheim's later writings to accept that the relations between an individual's situation, motives, actions and ideas are more complex than envisaged in a mechanistic social determinism: a situation allows various alternative courses of action, and the consciousness the individual brings to the situation cannot be treated as epiphenomenal. Contrast this approach with the following mechanistic statement from 'Ideology and Utopia':

[1] These essays were written in the early 1930s, and are thus the latest of Mannheim's writings that we consider, with the exception of Part One of the English version of 'Ideology and Utopia', written for publication in 1936.

> '... those who participate directly in the process of production - the worker and the entrepreneur - being bound to a particular class and mode of life, have their outlooks and activities directly and exclusively determined by their specific social situations ...'
> (1936: 140)

Whether or not Mannheim sees consciousness as determined by social situation, he would certainly include meaningful elements in a substructure of action. We have already pointed out, in relation to the theories of Max Scheler,[1] that Mannheim sees the substructure in the sociology of knowledge as meaningful. We may infer from Mannheim's work that he would include in the substructure not only the social situation and conditions of action, but also those aspects of consciousness necessary for action: subjective interests and essential knowledge.

Conceptions of the substructure in terms of consciousness and social situation will vary according to the models of social structure that underlie theories in the sociology of knowledge. An important element of these models is the supposed relationship between the individual and the group or between the consciousness of each. In Mannheim's work, one point at which this relationship is explored is where he investigates the origins of the thought which corresponds to the group's desired system of actions. Mannheim suggests the possibility that a utopia may originate as the wish-fantasy of a single individual, but he nevertheless attributes this to the group which later adopts the corresponding system as its aim. As he himself points out:

> 'This involves the assumption that the ex post facto acceptance of the new view by certain strata only lays bare the impulse and the social roots of the outlook in which the forerunner already participated unconsciously, and from which he drew the general tendency of his otherwise indisputably individual accomplishment.'
> (1936: 186)

[1] See above, p 24

Only if this assumption is made can the attribution of the individual's wish-fantasy to the group serve as an explanation of the genesis of the wish-fantasy itself. Mannheim fails to recognise that any one wish-fantasy may correspond to more than one type of social system; and that the function of the wish-fantasy for the individual and later for the group may be very different, and that therefore the meaning may have changed.[1]

This illustration marks one pole (approaching a position of group realism) of Mannheim's somewhat contradictory conception of the relationship between the individual and the group in terms of 'knowledge'. At the beginning of this section we made the point, which may be taken as the other pole, that Mannheim considered that each individual was involved in the group's activities in a different manner, and thus each had his own perspective, his own view of the common world of the group:

> '... knowledge is from the very beginning a co-operative process of group life, in which everyone unfolds his knowledge within the framework of a common fate, a common activity, and the overcoming of common difficulties (in which, however, each has a different share).'
> (1936: 26, my emphasis)

Even where Mannheim explicitly rejects a position of group realism, he emphasises the importance of the group for an understanding of the individual's thought:

> 'Only the individual is capable of thinking ... Nevertheless it would be false to deduce from this that all the ideas and sentiments which motivate an individual have their origin in him alone, and can be adequately explained solely on the basis of his own life-experience. ... it is not men in general who think, or even isolated individuals who do the thinking, but men in certain groups who have developed a particular style of thought in an endless series of responses to certain typical situations characterising their common position. ... Every individual is therefore in a two-fold sense pre-determined by the fact of growing up in a society: on the one hand he finds a ready-made situation and on the other he finds in that situation pre-formed patterns of thought and of conduct.' (1936: 2-3)

[1] One of Mannheim's earlier arguments, that change of function brings change of meaning (1952: 187), acts against his standpoint here.

This emphasis, on the significance of the group for the development of an individual's consciousness, is valid: yet Mannheim neglects to point out (even where he allows for the influence of individuals) that each individual may be involved in more than one group, and that the individual's thought is thus not merely a part, at best modified, of a single group's thought: it is the result of his interaction with various groups, some of which may have greater influence upon him than others, and also of the various attitudes he has built up, which may modify his interactions and lead to a more ready acceptance of certain ideas than of others.

We have seen in Mannheim tendencies towards a crude Marxist conflation of individual and group consciousness, and of social situation and interest. These tendencies are brought together in the interdependence of the concepts of class and world view in Goldmann, who presents perhaps the fullest and most sophisticated Marxist account of the sociology of knowledge, and to the exposition and critique of which we now turn.

(iv) Situation and Consciousness: Goldmann's Sociology of Knowledge

It is worth looking first at Goldmann's conception of consciousness, as this reveals many of the assumptions upon which his sociology of knowledge is based. In a paper given to the Fourth World Congress of Sociology ('Conscience Réele et Conscience Possible, Conscience Adéquate et Fausse Conscience') Goldmann defines consciousness as:

> '... a certain aspect of all human behaviour involving the division of labour'. (1959: 3),

thus eliminating any purely individual facts of consciousness. Indeed he raises the important question of the subject of consciousness, and comes to the somewhat ambiguous conclusion that it is:

> '... neither the isolated individual nor just the group, but an extremely variable structure comprising at the same time the individual and the group or a certain number of groups'.
> (1959: 4)

Goldmann maintains that every social fact is in essential respects a fact of consciousness, and that every fact of consciousness should be studied as part of a wider totality than merely the object itself of which the consciousness is an aspect: indeed such facts must be seen within the context of:

> '... the way in which the members of different groups constituting global societies think of the whole of social life, and the structure of the group, or more exactly the groups, of which they are a part'.
> (1959: 5)

Goldman thus seems to be advocating the insertion of such facts within the world views of the groups concerned. Furthermore, Goldmann does not view groups and their world views as static phenomena, but rather as entities developing in history. (1959: 6-7)

Goldmann's theory of consciousness as presented in this paper is thus consistent with his 'genetic structuralism'. (1967: 510-511) Reality is, according to this conception, made up of processes of structuration and destructuration, the structures concerned being 'essences', somewhat similar to Max Weber's ideal-types. However Goldmann differs from Weber in considering that behind the methodological conceptualisations of the 'essences' lie the actual essences, which are hypothesised as real elements combining and conflicting to bring about reality. They are thus never visible in their pure form, but only, as it were, diluted. It is the task of the sociologist to bring to light these essences and to trace the course of their development and decline. It is within this framework that Goldmann conceives of the 'maximum potential consciousness' of a group, which refers to the extreme realisation of a tendency common to the thought and emotions of the members of a social group, the 'awareness' (=actualisation?) of this tendency varying from individual to individual.

(1964: 18) (It is perhaps in the light of genetic structuralism that the sociology of literature so appeals to Goldmann, great literary works being for him the extreme coherent realisation of the tendency of the world view of a social class,[1] the social class itself of oourse being an essence which plays a dynamic role in the process of structuration and destructuration.)

After the definition of consciouness, Goldmann proceeds to the analysis thereof, in which he distinguishes between conscience réelle and conscience possible, as referring to: a) the actual consciousness of a group as it exists at a certain moment in history; and b) the most 'adequate' consciousness possible for a given group without the group thereby changing its nature. (1959: 6) By 'adequacy' of consciousness, Goldmann is referring to the degree of faithfulness to reality of the group's picture of the world. He distinguishes various elements in the consciousness of a group - those which are transitory, those which are stable, and those which are 'essential' or basic to the group, without which the group would cease to exist or would become another group. (1959: 6) Thus the possible consciousness of a group is the most adequate consciousness of which the group is capable within the framework of its basic consciousness.

It is implicit in Goldmann's account that the causal determination of the actualisation of possible consciousness is not problematic, thus leaving for the sociologist the task of accounting for those elements of actual consciousness which are not explained by reference to tendencies towards the 'conscience possible'. He advocates the construction of not only a typology of 'consciences possibles' based upon their content at the historical moment of attainment of maximum adequacy, but also a typ-

[1] See below, Chapter 11, p 252

ology of structural modes of actual inadequacy ranging from secondary, peripheral distortions to false consciousness and even, in the most extreme cases, bad faith. (1959: 7-8)

Goldmann's theoretical formulations of possible consciousness seem to refer to the contents of the world view having maximum adequacy of representation of reality; yet the examples he gives of deviations from the tendency towards possible consciousness (for instance, the desire of a worker to climb the social ladder rather than maintain solidarity with fellow workers) refer to values rather than knowledge, to the correct attitude towards the world rather than the correct representation of it. Goldmann thus cannot claim objectivity for his use of 'conscience possible': there are many possible value-standpoints appropriate to a certain social position, and only through value-judgement would it be possible to designate the most appropriate. However, even if Goldmann were to remain within the limits of his theoretical formulation, this would be to ignore Mannheim's insight that the truth is socially determined to the extent that there are social forces contributing towards our adequate perception of reality just as there are those which incline us towards illusions. Goldmann moreover does not allow for the fact that there may be present within one group two equally valid perspectives upon reality, and thus two equally adequate 'consciences possibles'. He could incorporate this Mannheimian conception within his own theoretical framework only if he asserted that the synthesis of the two perspectives (and therefore a fuller representation of reality) was the highest possible consciousness, or that the more than temporary existence of one of these perspectives on any large scale would be incompatible with the continued existence of the group. The first of those two possible assertions in fact reveals the dubious status of the notion of possible consciousness, in that it would be difficult to put a limit upon the number of possible perspectives

upon reality that could be incorporated in the synthesising world view of a group. Detailed, refined and wide-ranging truth is not necessarily incompatible with the existence of almost any social group, and hence it becomes impossible to put a limit to the possible consciousness of a group, especially when one considers that the sociologist himself has a perspective upon reality, and that nobody can ever know what is the 'whole truth'. The limits of the possible consciousness of a group must rather lie in the sphere of knowledge together with values ('values' being used in a broad sense, thus including also ends and sentiments). Knowledge can be incompatible with the existence of a social group only if this knowledge reveals facts that are relevant to value in such a way that: a) the values are seen to be based on false premises and/or are unattainable; b) the values are seen to be attainable through means other than those previously utilised; or c) new values are able/encouraged to arise. Under such conditions the group's behaviour may be altered in such a radical way as to necessitate its designation as a different group.

The other way that Goldmann could deal with the problem of a group having two perspectives is, as previously stated, to contend that the more than temporary existence of one of these perspectives on any large scale would be incompatible with the continued existence of the group. In relation to the above remarks it can be seen that this will only be true, a) insofar as the perspective is relevant in one of the three ways we have outlined; or b) insofar as the perspective contradicts the basic consciousness (excluding values) essential to the maintenance of the group. Thus if society is seen as a hierarchy of status groups rather than as a dichotomy of classes, then it will be impossible for a group formed on the basis of common class position to continue to exist (assuming that the status divisions do not coincide with the class

dichotomy). Such basic consciousness does not of itself imply values, though it certainly excludes those value-positions which require a different perspective. And of course what maintains a social group is not basic consciousness but values, which however are concretely (in their implications for behaviour) unable to survive a change in basic consciousness.

The above clarification of the valid interpretation of the place of knowledge and values in the notion of 'conscience possible' refers only to the maximum potential consciousness of the group, and it also implies that this group, even before it has realised its possible consciousness, is conscious of itself as a group. If we diverge from Goldmann's point of view, and contend that the subject of consciousness cannot be determined a priori, and if we thus do not eliminate the individual from consideration, then we may see that maximum potential consciousness may be different for the individual and for the group. For the individual we may delineate a basic consciousness without which he would be unable to remain in his social position, According to this position and its basic consciousness, various perspectives, value-standpoints, etc., may be adequate, in the sense that they represent direct responses to social location rather than being imposed from outside, as through ideological manipulation. Thus the value of Goldmann's conception becomes clear: although there are determining factors involved in the individual's particular response to a social location, nevertheless these are of a different kind from those which account for the other elements of his 'conscience réele', since these latter elements derive rather from another individual or group in the society (or in the past) and are adequate to their social location.

To speak of the maximum potential consciousness of a group is not as straightforward. Clearly what passes as 'adequate response' may be narrowed, especially if maximum potential consciousness here includes the group's consciousness of itself as a group. There are several possible definitions of 'group' where: a) The 'group' concerned may be merely a category created by the sociologist. b) The definition of 'group' may include the additional prerequisite that, on the basis of the elements common to those within this category, responses in terms of values and perspectives are the same, possibly leading to collective behaviour. c) The group may be deemed to exist only where 'group behaviour' is present, i.e. where the behaviour of each individual in the category affects the behaviour of others. c) is thus a group because of mutually effective behaviour; whilst b) is a group due to common value- and perspective-responses to what is held in common. Basic consciousness might thus be seen either as: a) that which is necessary for the individuals in the category to remain in that category; or b) that which is necessary for individuals to maintain common perspectives; or c) that which is necessary for individuals to continue group behaviour. Maximum potential consciousness from the point of view of a) would be the basic consciousness of the group in b), or possibly it could be in addition the maximum potential consciousness of b), which would be consciousness of itself as a group. Maximum potential consciousness for c) would involve each individual's adequately responding in terms of values and perspectives on the basis of his group behaviour and only on this basis; further, common values and perspectives; still further, group consciousness (presumably the maximum potential consciousness). The concept of basic consciousness with respect to b) may account for why a group fails to arise, namely because the responses to, e.g., social location are too various.

The above analysis indicates that, in describing the maximum potential consciousness of a class for instance, theorists should be careful to specify whether they are concerned with class as a group of type a), b) or c), or which combination of the three, so that ambiguity and unstated assumptions are avoided.

In accounting for the various factors in the actual consciousness of a group, one may also be dealing with those factors which prevent the group from attaining maximum potential consciousness: for instance, ideological influence from outside the group may hinder the development of group-consciousness. The notion of possible consciousness with its criterion of adequacy is an aid in discovering those elements which are likely to arise from the nature of the group (or category) itself, as opposed to those which are due to other factors, such as propoganda from another group. In practice, however, difficulties in the employment of the concept of 'possible consciousness' are more apparent, since the choice of one adequate response rather than another may be due to ideological influence; and of course groups or the common elements of categories may arise through the actions of other individuals or groups in the society, thus belying the assumption of autonomous group formation underlying the above statements.

Finally, if we look at the notion of false consciousness, then we may see how Goldmann's failure to deal with the maximum potential consciousness of an individual in a social position leads him to make unwarranted assumptions about the self-explanatory nature of tendencies towards maximum potential consciousness in a group. Goldmann, who does not define false consciousness, nevertheless implies that it is in a sense the opposite of possible consciousness, the latter being the most adequate consciousness possible without the destruction of the group (or rather its basic consciousness), while the former being inadequate consciousness without

necessarily implying the destruction of basic consciousness. Within this conception, 'false consciousness' could still have three meanings: a) 'untrue' consciousness, or misrepresentation of reality; b) consciousness which is not consistent with the 'true' interests of the group[1]; c) consciousness which is not an adequate response to social location but rather arises from 'external' forces. Type a) implying a fundamental difference between the social determination of truth and falsehood, we should reject in favour of a study of different perspectives (more or less adequate) on reality. Furthermore, it must be remembered that falsehood, like truth, is relative; and that in any case Goldmann is more concerned with consciousness including rather than excluding values. Type b) we reject, adopting the Mannheimian conception of several adequate responses to a given social location. Within the third conception of false consciousness, then, it can be seen that, if indeed one even wishes to use the concept of false consciousness in referring to a group, it must nevertheless mean something different from the false consciousness of an individual. For what is an adequate response of the individual to his social location may be quite contrary to the maximum potential consciousness of the group, and hence inadequate from the point of view of the group. Goldmann is unable to grasp this distinction, as he limits himself to the group in his usage of 'conscience possible'. Hence he sees the tendency of the consciousness of the individuals in a group towards the maximum potential consciousness of that group as a self-explanatory force, whereas in fact it is only one possibility amongst many, owing to the alternative possible adequate responses of each individual to his location. In a sense one may see the adequate responses of the individual to his social position as self-explanatory, but an analysis of other elements in the situation is necessary to account for any tendency towards the maximum potential conscious-

[1] A critique of this predominant conception of false consciousness is presented in the section on Karl Mannheim, p 34ff above.

ness of the group of which he is a member.

We have thus seen that Goldmann's conceptions of possible, actual, adequate, false and basic consciousness may be useful for an analysis of which elements of consciousness are responses by the individual to his social position and which are 'externally' determined, as through ideological influence; but that his approach suffers from many false assumptions, mainly due to his subsumption of the consciousness of the individual in the consciousness of the group.

Despite the emphasis on group consciousness that we find in Goldmann's 1959 paper, he denies elsewhere the possibility of supra-individual consciousness:

> 'Collective consciousness, class consciousness for example, is only the totality of states of individual consciousness and of their tendencies resulting from the mutual influence of men upon each other and their effects upon nature'.
> (1969: 127)

These tendencies would appear, however, in the light of Goldmann's genetic structuralism, (1967: 510ff), to have a life of their own in similar form to supra-individual consciousness. Whether or not Goldmann subscribes in practice to this latter conception, there is no doubt of his emphasis on the social nature of thought. He points out that the individual could not possibly create his own mental structures, his experience being too brief and too limited. 'Mental structures' are social phenomena and:

> '... can only be the result of the conjoint activity of a large number of individuals who find themselves in a similar situation, that is to say, who constitute a privileged social group, these individuals having, for a lengthy period and in an intensive way, lived through a series of problems and having endeavoured to find a significant solution for them.'
> (1967: 495)

This statement further reveals Goldmann's view that all thought is pragmatic in the broadest sense: indeed he asserts that:

> '... all human behaviour ... can be translated by the research worker in terms of the existence of a practical problem and of an attempt to solve that problem.' (1967: 494)

Goldmann's pragmatism and emphasis on the social nature of thought are combined in his predominant interest in the role of class in the social determination of thought. The reason why social class is the most important group for the sociologist of knowledge or literature to study, according to Goldmann, is that the problems that have been uppermost in men's minds throughout history have been economic, whether simply because of the will to survive or, for those who gain through exploitation, the desire to maintain or increase their wealth. (1964: 16-17; & 1969: 87-88) Goldmann nevertheless is unable to establish the overriding historical importance of economic problems compared with other needs and motivations. His conception is particularly weak in relation to those whose economic power has granted them much leisure: many such individuals will be able to divorce themselves fairly radically from the life of economic activity and interests. It is however true that Goldmann, when dealing with the individual, is able to arrive at an unmechanistic conception similar to that of Mannheim, when the latter views social locations as potential bases for various reactions:

> 'Undoubtedly the thinking of an individual can be influenced in many ways by the environment with which he has been in immediate contact; however, this influence can produce different effects: as an adaptation but also a reaction of refusal or rebellion, or even as a systhesis of ideas met with in one environment with others coming from elsewhere, etc.' (Goldmann, 1969: 59)

Goldmann thus attempts a solution to this problem (of how it is that the thought of some individuals seems relatively unaffected by social class behaviour and interests) by analytically separating the individual and the group:

> '... an individual can doubtless separate his ideas and intellectual aspirations from his daily life; the same is not true of social groups, for as far as they are concerned, their ideas and behaviour are rigorously and closely related.' (1964: 17)

Goldmann does not explain why this should be so, and indeed the proposition that a group's ideas and behaviour are necessarily related only holds if the group is itself defined in terms of common behaviour, rather than for instance in terms of the sharing of ideas. We should thus be led to a tautological proposition that the ideas of the individual as a member of the group are bound to be based upon the group's behaviour, as the group is defined by its common behaviour.

Having assumed a necessary relationship between a group's ideas and behaviour, and having accounted for his emphasis on social class in terms of the overriding historical importance of economic problems, Goldmann is free to propose a necessary link between social class and what he sees as the most important tool for the analysis of consciousness in history: 'world view'. Goldmann defines world view as:

> '... a convenient term for the whole complex of ideas, aspirations and feelings which links together the members of a social group (a group which, in most cases, assumes the existence of a social class) and which opposes them to members of other social groups.' (1964: 17)

He sees the world view as an ideal-type, a necessary methodological tool for understanding complex historical reality:

> 'It is not an immediate, empirical fact, but a conceptual working hypothesis indispensable to an understanding of the way in which individuals actually express their ideas.' (1964: 15)

> '... an extrapolation made by the historian for the purposes of convenience; nevertheless it does extrapolate a tendency which really exists among the members of a certain social group, who all attain this class consciousness in a more or less coherent manner.' (1964: 17)

In these quotations it can be seen how readily Goldmann relates world views to social classes, more so for instance than Mannheim, who has fewer presuppositions. Goldmann sees social classes as constituting the infra-

structure of world views, at least from the seventeenth century onwards (1964: 99), and in another place since the end of antiquity. (1969: 102) A coherent world view such as is expressed in philosophical and artistic works represents the maximum potential consciousness of the group, usually a social class. (1964: 17) Conversely,

> 'The maximum potential consciousness of a social class always constitutes a psychologically coherent world view which may be expressed on the plane of religion, philosophy, literature or art.'
>
> (1969: 103)

Although Goldmann seems to be positing an historical relationship between class and world view, in practice his definitions of class and world view and his methodology for their discovery presuppose their relationship. Goldmann's definition of social class is unusual in that it includes not only: a) 'its function in production'; but also b) 'its relations with the members of other classes'; and even c) 'its potential consciousness which is a world-view'. (1969: 111) If b) and c) are not implied already in a) (and if they were then it would be unnecessary to include them in the definition), then the question of how far function in production determines inter-class relations and (more particularly of interest to us) world view, is left open. To illustrate the problems caused by his definition, Goldmann describes his difficulty in deciding if the 'noblesse de robe' did or did not constitute a social class (1969: 111). He states that his discovery of the Jansenist world view as expressed by the works of Pascal and Racine led him to decide in favour of an affirmative answer. Yet Goldmann seems to be guilty of circularity of argument. If classes are defined as having world views, then of course it will be found (as Goldmann states) that all classes have world views. If a world is not found, then the class is not a class. Similarly it seems that if Goldmann finds a world view, he will have to find a class to which it corresponds - of which it is the expression - as otherwise he would

probably say that it was not a world view. What he will do in practice is thus to work from both ends until they meet, naturally causing subtle changes along the way in the description of the social class and the conception of the world view.

In another place Goldmann's conception of social class is still further narrowed:

> '... not all groups based on economic interests necessarily constitute social classes. In order for a group to become a class, its interests must be directed, in the case of a 'revolutionary' class, towards a complete transformation of the social structure or, if it is a 'reactionary' class, towards maintaining the present social structure unchanged.' (1964: 17)

Thus Goldmann effectively reduces the number of social classes to two, all others presumably being reclassified as economic interest groups. One feels that Goldmann is straining too hard to fit social reality into a crude Marxist schema, which can afford to ignore the problems of the relations between classes and their world views, interests, class consciousness, opposition and conflict by enveloping all these elements in the very definition of social class itself.

Corresponding to his narrowed definition of social class, Goldmann has a highly restrictive conception of world view, which perhaps accounts for his conviction that there are only a limited number of world views available throughout history. (1964: 20; & 1969: 131) Goldmann is not consistent in dealing with the notion of world view, but in 'The Human Sciences and Philosophy' he sees world views as being applicable only to the perspectives of social classes which are dominant or rising, and not to other social groups or declining classes: for these the term 'ideology' is applicable, since it conveys the notion of the partial rather than total character of the perspectives involved. (1969: 103) Thus 'reformism' is an important ideological phenomenon, but not a world view, Goldmann

referring to the fact that there is no reformist ethic, aesthetic or epistemology. (1969: 153) This narrow conception of world view confines analysis to very broad formal aspects of thought and feeling, and hence ignores the more particular aspects, which presumably would be subsumed under 'ideology'. Yet Goldmann's own studies are not so constricted: perspectives that are included by him as world views are nonetheless examined in their specificity. Moreover it seems that if the thought of another group (not a class) had the same broad formal characteristics and yet different particular aspects, Goldmann would see the perspective of this group as ideological rather than as constituting a world view. This inconsistency, accountable by the fact that Goldmann presupposes that only classes have world views, is clearly unsatisfactory. Furthermore, Goldmann's assumption that declining classes and other groups are unable to formulate a total vision of the world which has a meaning peculiar to them is highly disputable.

Much of Goldmann's work on the sociology of knowledge clearly involves a conception of the substructure in terms of social differentiation. In this conception he is concerned with groups rather than individuals, with classes as the most significant groups, with the struggle for power between dominant and rising classes, and with the 'false consciousness' which may arise from the ideological power of the dominant class. We now turn to the question of how far Goldmann's conception of the nature of the social structure is reflected in the work of other sociologists of knowledge.

(v) Social Differentiation in the Substructure

There are of course many who share Goldmann's views on the overriding importance of class in the social structural conditioning of thought. Others however are unwilling to grant class a priori significance, or may make contradictory statements on the subject. Mannheim, for

instance, eschews dogmatism in his later work, but in his earlier writings he clearly assigns the greatest importance to class in the analysis of social structure: where he distinguishes between the mental substructure and superstructure,[1] 'mind-in-the-substructure' is seen as:

> '... involving primarily the conditions of production, together with all the concomitant social relationships-' (1952: 163)

Lefort agrees on the importance of class, but argues against a realist and mechanistic view of the relationship between class and ideology, and stresses, as does Mannheim,[2] that an ideology must be seen in its meaningful and historical context. (1956: 301) He notes that an ideology which is in some way useful for a class does not necessarily originate from that class[3]; that an ideology may have multiple sources; and that a single class may express itself in manifold ways. (1956: 299)

Dahrendorf looks at the question of class on a level closer to the individual. He takes a quotation from Marx's Preface to the First Edition of Capital:

> 'But I am concerned here with <u>the persons</u> only, in so far as they are <u>personifications of economic categories, carriers of certain class relations and interests</u>. Less than any other one can my point of view, which comprehends the development of the economic formation of society as a process of natural history, make the individual responsible for conditions, the creature of which he remains socially, however much he may rise above them subjectively.' (Dahrendorf, 1956: 293)

Dahrendorf's critique is directed at Marx's concentration on class position to the detriment of other possible sources of interest. He broadens Marx's idea into a conception of 'interest expectations' that are thought to be attached to certain status-roles and to relate the status-roles either positively or negatively to the major institutions of society.

1 See above, p 24

2 See below, Chapter 4, pp 94-95

3 This point is consistent with Pareto's emphasis on the <u>utility</u> of ideas: see above, p 29

(1956: 294) Although 'interest expectations' are inherent in some status-roles, they will not necessarily be generalised through the personality. (1956: 294) Dahrendorf thus envisages the possibility of compartmentalisation: he does not however seem to see the possibility of role distance - i.e. that one may play the role for an ulterior purpose without sharing the inherent 'interest expectation'. One might also argue that the role may be played sincerely but without any developed sense of one's interest: Dahrendorf himself notes that the predominant concept of 'interest' implies articulation and commitment, and thus he introduces the idea of 'latent interests' to refer to loose, unformulated but common orientations of quasi-groups. (1956 : 292-3) Despite Dahrendorf's care in the use of the term 'interest', it may nonetheless be preferable to abandon the concept of 'interest expectation' in favour of a term such as 'orientation', which carries less implication of rationality and deliberation.[1]

Although Dahrendorf points to wider potential sources of interest (thus concurring with our view of class as one possible analytical substructure in the sociology of knowledge), and indicates the possibility of compartmentalisation (with its effect of limiting the influence of one interest-source on an individual's total thought), he nevertheless seems to have remained with Marx at the level of social categories, thus begging the question of how far any individual's consciousness is circumscribed by his social roles. Dahrendorf's structuralist conception of social role hampers his otherwise interesting attempt to develop a refined conception of the relationship between class and consciousness.

Although sociologists of knowledge have tended to discuss the substructure principally in terms of class, there has also been some consideration of social differentiation in terms of elites and masses. Both

[1] The 'orientation' attached to status-role might then bear comparison with 'basic consciousness' as conceived by Goldmann: see above, p 42

Scheler and Pareto, for instance, see the culture of the elite as the most important source of the culture of society as a whole; though of course for Scheler it is the 'drive structure' of the elite that is the principal determinant (Staude, 1967: 177), whilst Pareto relates the elite's ideas to their 'residues'. (1966: 247-250; & 260-265) Elite and class analysis are of course not necessarily incompatible: for Marx, Goldmann, and for Mannheim in places, the ideas of the dominant class permeate the whole of the society's culture.

Whether one makes an analysis in terms of class or of elite, it is clear that power is a crucial variable in the social organisation of culture. In the first place power, as Berger and Luckmann show (1967: 139ff), may involve the ability to impose one's definition of reality upon others. More specifically it may decide which of various contending ideas become current in society at large, even though the ideas may not have been formulated by any of the power groups themselves. Thus although theories may be concocted and may compete in 'a sort of societal vacuum', when these theories' rivalry takes place on a broader social stage, when groups take over the theories with which they have affinity, then 'extra-theoretical interests', respective power, will decide the outcome. (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 137-8) The relationship between 'cultural experts' and those with broader social power is variable, as Berger and Luckmann show (1967: 138ff)- and indeed as Mannheim in his writings on intellectuals had previously indicated (1956: 121ff). Berger and Luckmann in fact take a particular interest in the social organisation of 'knowledge' in terms of theoretical experts (1967: 134ff), and more generally in terms of social differentiation by interest in and access to social knowledge (1967: 102-105).[1]

[1] Cf Madge's previously suggested investigation of the 'social structure of social eidos'. (Madge, 1964)

Despite their concern with the social organisation of knowledge, ideological power, etc. (elements which would belong to the substructure in our conception), the principal characterisation of what we should call the substructure remains for Berger and Luckmann that of a relatively undifferentiated 'take-for-granted' reality, a Schutzian intersubjective world of everyday reality (1967: 37), not only shared by individuals but also integrated into a coherent and consistent whole through socially shared biographical reflection (1967: 81ff): the picture is strangely reminiscent of Parsons in its harmony, consensus and integration. This is hardly surprising if we consider two principal assumptions of Berger and Luckmann: 'intersubjectivity' and individual struggles for consistency.[1] Obviously, if the individual strives for consistency in an intersubjective world, a consistent social world must result. Although group conflict is envisaged as a possibility, power and social differentiation by knowledge are considered normally to function to maintain everyday reality and to legitimate it on ever more encompassing levels. (1967: 112ff) Such high level integration is particularly useful where discrepant meanings are actualised within everyday life (1967: 116), as otherwise presumably the intersubjective world would be threatened.[2] This highly integrated social model is somewhat modified when Berger and Luckmann apply it to historical situations; yet, even when applied to 'modern pluralistic societies', the basic intersubjective everyday reality remains with little challenge from particular coexisting realities:

1 An emphasis on individual struggles for consistency is apparent throughout Chapter 1: 'Internalization of Reality', in Part Three of Berger and Luckmann.

2 We shall explore the role of legitimations in Berger and Luckmann's work more fully below, in relation to the superstructure as seen from their perspective: see below, Chapter 3, p 74 ff

> 'It is important to bear in mind that most modern societies are pluralistic. This means that they have a shared core universe taken for granted as such, and different partial universes coexisting in a state of mutual accommodation. The latter probably have some ideological functions, but outright conflict between ideologies has been replaced by varying degrees of tolerance or even cooperation.' (1967: 142)

The 'universes of meaning' mentioned in this quotation have a significant place in Berger and Luckmann's work: universes of meaning, like group consciousness, relate meanings to one another on a supra-individual level. Berger and Luckmann make this notion plausible through their assumption of intersubjectivity, which dispels doubts that would arise from the recognition of potentially conflicting interpretations of such universes. Universes of meaning are linked to individual consciousness through role analysis. (1967: 96) It is through roles that institutions are embodied in individual experience, and in general Berger and Luckmann seem to see this process as presenting little difficulty:

> 'In the common stock of knowledge there are standards of role performance that are accessible to all members of a society, or at least to those who are potential performers of the roles in question.' (1967: 91)

Once again one sees a parallel with Parsons: with the exception of 'unsuccessful socialisation', the individual's knowledge (including knowledge of expected behaviour) seems too directly and unambiguously taken from a clear and common stock. Although role distance is mentioned (1967: 162), role conflict and flexibility or ambiguity of role definition are treated as exceptional: one generally knows exactly what one has to do and readily agrees to do it.

Parallel to the harmonious picture of society, Berger and Luckmann present an image of the individual with a coherent and consistent view of the world. This is achieved partly through the Meadian concept of the 'generalised other':

> 'The formation within consciousness of the generalised other ... implies the internalisation of society as such and of the objective reality established therein, and, at the same time, the subjective establishment of a coherent and continuous identity.'
> (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 153)

Unsuccessful socialisation may result from heterogeneity in the socialising personnel; but this is seen as unlikely, since:

> '... individuals ... sufficiently cohesive as a group to take on the task of primary socialisation are likely to have concocted some sort of common world between them.' (1967: 188-9)

Yet it is not obvious that this is generally the case: to begin with, each socialising person may himself lack a consistent and coherent view of the world, let alone being able to agree on one with another person. What links the primary socialising personnel may fall far short of a common world.

Beyond primary socialisation Berger and Luckmann envisage the possibility of role-specific knowledge (1967: 95), that implies an incomplete sharing of the everyday world: indeed they suggest that if at this stage discrepant role-worlds are available, there will be an increase in consciousness of world-relativity. (1967: 192) Such an eventuality would seem to counter their arguments as to the 'taken-for-granted' nature of everyday life, and indicates that at times they should make it clear that their ideal-typical model of coherent and harmonious social reality is an ideal type. Certainly, as we have noted, when they look more closely at historical types they allow for the possibility of relatively autonomous sub-universes of meaning, particularly in a condition of pluralism: though even here they are concerned with the 'problem' of overall meaningful integration. (1967: 102-3)

Corresponding to the relatively autonomous universes of meaning that groups in a society may come to develop, Berger and Luckmann posit 'finite provinces of meaning'[1] (found even in relatively undifferentiated societies):

> '... enclaves within the paramount reality marked by circumscribed meanings and modes of experience.'
> (1967: 39),

including for instance religious or aesthetic experience, realms from which one always returns to the 'paramount reality of everyday life'. (1967: 40) These finite provinces of meaning are the counterpart of Berger and Luckmann's shared and integrated everyday reality: Berger and Luckmann draw the dividing line between these different realities (e.g. religious experience and everyday life) very sharply, perhaps because if the competing perspectives of finite realities were seen as capable of interfusing with everyday reality, bringing with them the necessary 'leaping' from one perspective to another, then everyday reality could no longer appear so highly integrated, and differing perspectives on everyday reality would belie its intersubjectivity. In a similar fashion, role-distance may ward off a threat, from sub-universes of role-specific knowledge, to the core shared everyday reality. Through role-distance the individual:

> '... establishes distance between his total self and its reality on the one hand, and the role-specific partial self and its reality on the other.'
> (1967: 162)

Concerning social differentiation in the substructure, Berger and Luckmann would thus seem to present an undifferentiated, intersubjective, paramount reality of everyday life, with differentiated meaningful spheres sharply divided therefrom and thus providing little challenge thereto. Although social differentiation in terms of power may result in competing ideologies, the emphasis is upon power as used to organise knowledge for

[1] Here, as elsewhere in their argument, Berger and Luckmann are indebted to Schutz. See also the footnote on p 188 of Chapter 8 below.

the purpose of integration. This model of a highly integrated substructure predominates in the earlier part of their book; though in later historical sections, and in particular in relation to 'society as subjective reality', Berger and Luckmann give more room to individual variations and exceptions.

From this section on social differentiation in the substructure it thus emerges that characterisations of the social structure frequently rest upon unexamined presuppositions, so that general models of how society works are often ideal-typical models of limited applicability. In terms of the sociology of knowledge this means that the possible sources of ideas etc. and the potential modes of relationship between superstructure and substructure are severely restricted, and a narrowed sociology of knowledge ensues.

(vi) Narrow Perspectives on the Sociology of Knowledge

In the examination of how the substructure is conceived by sociologists of knowledge, we have seen the importance of meaning and motive as well as social structural elements. An important question though is how narrow is the conception of substructural consciousness and social structure and their interrelationship. We have seen how the relationship between situation and consciousness is frequently presupposed, through concepts such as objective interests and false consciousness, thus giving a restricted and often mono-deterministic account of the relationship. We have similarly found characterisations of the social structure to be narrow in their exclusion of alternative possible social structural types: witness for instance the mutual contradiction of Goldmann's and Berger and Luckmann's versions of social reality, and their consequent view of the nature and role of the superstructure. Likewise with consciousness in the substructure, we have found many theorists to rele-

gate individual consciousness to unimportant deviations from the theme, whether the theme is group or class consciousness, or intersubjective everyday life. As for motivational elements, interests, which may themselves imply too much rationality and deliberation, may be further narrowed to those related to economic power. Even Scheler's drives are restricted to three types (blood-ties, power drives and economic motivation) each of which he sees as predominating at a different stage of civilisation. (Staude, 1967: 174-5) At least Scheler recognises that there are various sources and forms of organisation of power, and that one source or organisational form should not be assumed to be the archetype.

A narrow conception of the substructure not only implies a restricted sociology of knowledge, but frequently also a model in which one part of society determines the rest of society and its more abstract ideas: this is the case with Scheler, whose three successively predominant drives and resulting social conditions determine the adoption of ideas; and with certain formulations of Marx, in which (as noted above) it is claimed that a particular type of social being including consciousness (i.e. the mode of production of material life) determines the rest of social being and more removed ideological consciousness. Here we have a restricted sociology of knowledge not only in the negative sense of the exclusion of potential variables, but also in the positive sense of asserting a predominant deterministic relationship governing society and its consciousness.

Whilst suggestions that one should take account of particular elements in and relations between the substructure and superstructure may be useful, one cannot but note that such suggestions are frequently presented as general models of universal applicability. Yet the only valid models of this latter type are formal rather than substantive, 'general how' models

rather than indications of determining principles. The difference between the models is largely a matter of breadth: the 'general how' model indicates variables (and their potential interrelationships) that are found to be important to take into account for the investigation of certain general problems; whilst substantive models restrict the number of variables considered and more narrowly specify their interrelationships. Substantive models may be useful as ideal types, but cannot be assumed to be of universal applicability. A model considering ideological power, for instance, may be formal; a model tracing ideologies to a dominant class, however, is substantive.[1] This is not to say that class cannot be seen in terms of a formal model in the sociology of knowledge: indeed to see class in these terms will be an aim of Part II of this thesis.

(vii) Conclusion

In our examination of the substructure in the sociology of knowledge, we have established the necessity for the inclusion of meaning and motive in the substructure, without assuming their relationship to situation and action, and without subsuming the consciousness of the actor in the consciousness of the group: it is here especially that we take issue with Goldmann's sociology of knowledge. Our comparison of Weber and Pareto in Chapter 1, and our further examination of Pareto's theories in this chapter, have yielded a more complex conception of motivation in relation to action and belief than the otherwise predominant notion of determination by interests would suggest. And through Mannheim we may develop various ideas which allow a less deterministic relationship between situation and consciousness (as in the ideas of commitment, and of alternative

[1] Sayer points out that a Marxist point of view (in particular as set out in 'The German Ideology') does not necessarily imply universal substantive models: Sayer would reject all attempts to generalise a particular base/superstructure model to all societies. (1975: Chapter 1)

responses to social location). More generally our emphasis on formal models in the sociology of knowledge argues against all those who present a fixed substantive notion of the substructure.

The substructure in the sociology of knowledge may thus be conceived in formal methodological individualist terms as action and situation and the consciousness directly involved therein in their socio-historical context, the involvement of consciousness being in the form of expression in or motivation towards action, or of the essential knowledge/basic consciousness necessary to perform the action or maintain/alter the situation, or of direct experience of or specific responses to the action/situation. Such a description of the substructure reveals our interest in the development of ideas in relation to action/situation and directly involved consciousness, rather than in the adoption of ideas merely through communication/persuasion as through ideological power. Furthermore, although account is taken of the socio-historical context, it is nonetheless contended that relations between situation, action and consciousness are fruitfully analysed in methodological individualist terms.[1]

Having thus broadly delineated the substructure, let us proceed to the analysis of the superstructure.

[1] The methodological individualist approach is outlined more fully below, Chapter 7, p 148 ff

## CHAPTER 3: SUPERSTRUCTURE IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

### (i) Introduction

Our discussion of the substructure in the sociology of knowledge has necessarily involved some presuppositions as to the nature of the superstructure: in this section we shall bring these presuppositions more clearly to light in the direct analysis of various conceptions of the superstructure.

From the start it is clear that some conceptions of the superstructure will be untenable in terms of the approach that we developed in Chapter 2 concerning the substructure. Dahlke for instance states that there are three main spheres whose interrelations may be researched: real factors, the theoretical contemplative and the ideal-normative spheres (1940: 86). The sphere of real factors here seems devoid of meaningful elements, and Mannheim's critique of Scheler's meaningless substructure thus becomes applicable.[1] Stark attempts to overcome the real-ideal dichotomy by proposing that the substructure is the ongoing process of social interaction, which presupposes an already existent mental universe; and the superstructure to be the forms of thought and action which gain subsequent independence of the ongoing process of social life through crystallisation (Stark, 1958: 244). Stark thus includes both thought and action in the substructure and superstructure; and it is of particular interest to us here that he includes action in the superstructure, due to his inability to conceive of abstract thought without an associated action-pattern: he sees ideas as emerging under guiding values, and values as never purely ideas but as calls to a definite mode of action. (Stark, 1958: 272) We should want to agree with Stark in his conception of a

[1] See Chapter 2, p 24 above.

meaningful substructure, but to reject his conception of the superstructure, which, if adopted, would deny the existence of the sociology of knowledge and replace it with a sociology of crystallised action/thought forms. The whole point of the sociology of knowledge as we see it is to relate action/situation and directly involved consciousness to more removed consciousness, and both Dahlke/Scheler and Stark deny this in their own way. Berger and Luckmann would deny it in principle if not in practice, i.e. what they would call the sociology of knowledge would be much broader than our conception, would involve the study of everyday meanings in social life (1967: 27), and would thus become practically synonymous with the whole field of interpretive sociology! In practice however much of their work involves the relations between meaningful social interaction and more removed 'knowledge'.

If we accept that the substructure is meaningful, then the basic problem in the definition of the superstructure is that of establishing on what basis the ideas therein are to be differentiated from those involved in the substructure. We have provisionally indicated that the differentiation should be based upon the degree of removal from action (or at least from a certain type of action the influence of which one is attempting to ascertain). The knowledge in the superstructure may be less directly related to action because it is 'subsequent' in some way (i.e. it is developed from action-involved consciousness); or because it is somehow 'distinct', for instance through being more abstract. It might even be independent to some extent, though if it is posited as entirely independent it cannot of course be influenced by the substructure.

If superstructural knowledge is less directly related to action, it is nevertheless clear that few sociologists of knowledge include all such 'knowledge' in the superstructure - or at least various elements are

emphasised more than others. At various points in this chapter we shall witness the way in which emphasis on selected elements of 'knowledge' produces a narrowed conception of the superstructure. For example, we have already seen how Goldmann narrows his investigation to thought defined in terms of world view, which itself is related by definition to class.[1] If this were to be the only available conception of 'world view', then the concept would be of little use in the sociology of knowledge, and would unduly narrow the potential superstructural knowledge to be examined. For a less restricted usage of the world view concept, we must turn once more to Mannheim's work.

(ii) Mannheim's Concept of 'Weltanschauung'.

In an early work, Mannheim defines the task of the sociology of knowledge as being that of outlining the various intellectual standpoints which characterise an epoch, and of tracing their origin and development in relation to the changing social structure. (1952: 180ff) The first stage in this process is the formulation of the standpoints or 'Weltanschauungen' (world views) of the epoch in question, and inevitably involves the interpretation of its 'cultural products'. Here Mannheim differentiates between the objective, expressive and documentary meanings of a cultural product. (1952: 44) The 'objective' is that meaning which can be discovered without going beyond the object itself to the intentions of its creator: no knowledge of the psyche of the creator is necessary to grasp this meaning. All that is necessary is acquaintance with the system (e.g. the theory of music - harmony, counterpoint, etc.) in terms of which the objective meaning of this object may be understood. (1952: 45-46) 'Expressive' meaning, on the other hand, requires a detailed knowledge of the creator of the product, so that one is able to infer correctly what meanings he intended by it. (1952: 46)

[1] See above, Chapter 2, p 51 ff

It is however 'documentary' meaning which is the most important of the three types of meaning for Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, since it is from the documentary meanings of cultural objectifications that he creates the Weltanschauung of an epoch. Here the cultural objectification (or an aspect of it) points to something beyond itself, to a global outlook that is totally contained in none of its specific manifestations, though each cultural product gives 'evidence' of this outlook (1952: 57 & 73-74) Mannheim notes that these generalisations from cultural objectifications have at various times been called the 'art motive' (Riegl), 'economic ethos' (Sombart), 'Weltanschauung' (Dilthey and others), 'spirit' (Max Weber and others), according to the purposes which they have served. (1952: 58)

Having introduced the concept of documentary meaning, Mannheim goes on to show that if we concentrate on the abstract theoretical aspects of a Weltanschauung we shall be ignoring many important contents (of cultural products) that are not capable of being adequately designated by concepts derived from a 'theoretical field', such as philosophy. (1952: 75) He attempts to show how concepts derived from 'a-theoretical fields' (such as the plastic arts) can elucidate far better the pre-theoretical meaning, which is grasped in the 'immediate givenness' of cultural products, and which is the vital component of the Weltanschauung. (1952: 64 & 77) Although we must describe the Weltanschauung in theoretical terms, nevertheless we may make use of pre-theoretical documentary meaning. (1952: 71) Concepts may be transposed from one field to another, a necessary step if we intend to give some idea of a common background behind all objectifications: and we may even have to resort to 'sublimating' a concept, that is to use a term which originally refers only to objective meaning, to designate the documentary meaning associated with the objective one. (1952: 79)

This then is the method of conceptual construction that Mannheim suggests we use in the formulation of Weltanschauungen. Yet it is still not clear precisely what he regards the Weltanschauung to be. Is it meant to be an ideal-type construct, and hence merely a methodological instrument, or does it possess some kind of ontological reality? An answer to this question may be found in a footnote (1952: 59), where Mannheim implies that whereas one can have an ontological and immediate experience of the subject of expressive interpretation, this is not possible for the subject of documentary interpretation, the Weltanschauung: he points out that Hegel and Lukács postulate it as a metaphysical subject rather than as a methodological device, implying that he himself takes the opposite point of view. In practice, however, Mannheim's standpoint is more ambiguous. For instance in one place (1952: 62) he suggests that every cultural objectification of an epoch should be examined and its documentary meaning established, and in this manner the Weltanschauung of the epoch is to be constructed, this Weltanschauung, however, being a coherent and consistent totality. Yet it is very unlikely that the subject of documentary interpretation of all the cultural products of an epoch (or even a stratum in that epoch) would be coherent and consistent unless in ideal-typical form; and if it is supposed to be an ideal-type, then is not Mannheim assuming the congruence of ideal-type and reality if he finds the manifestations of only this Weltanschauung in the documentary interpretation of the diverse cultural objectifications? Mannheim could resolve this dilemma only if he was to equate documentary interpretation with distinguishing in each cultural product the manifestations of an ideal-typical, consistent, coherent global outlook, rather than constructing this ideal-type from the documentary meanings he distinguishes in the various cultural objectifications. In effect, we are able to clarify Mannheim's procedure through a

juxtaposition of his sometimes confused and contradictory accounts of it. A cultural product, or aspect of it, is taken and interpreted for its potential documentary meaning, which is then verified, modified, or discounted by an analysis of whether the cultural objectifications of the epoch (or group) may be seen as supplying the same documentary meaning. We thus derive the initial, hypothetical, ideal-typical Weltanschauung from one or two cultural objectifications, and this then guides our quest for documentary meaning in the other cultural products of the epoch. This procedure may clearly result in conflicting interpretations, but not every documentary interpretation has the same claim to be accepted: firstly, cultural products -

> '... always unmistakably impose or exclude certain interpretations, so that we do have a certain control'. (1952: 62);

and secondly, the most adequate interpretation of an epoch is the one which -

> '... shows the greatest richness, the greatest substantial affinity with the object.' (1952: 62)

The Mannheimian process of Weltanschauung construction clearly results in a coherent and consistent ideal-type, which reveals his failure to distinguish between the implicit assumptions behind the acts, expressions and thoughts of an individual or group, and the logical integration of these assumptions into a coherent, consistent system of thought. In so far as the Weltanschauung concept is employed in the first of these two senses, then we will not necessarily find consistency and coherence, and indeed we may formulate an ideal-type without the full realisation of these qualities,[1] a possibility which Mannheim does not recognise. Insofar as we employ the term in the

[1] See for instance the discussion of a 'rag-bag' world view in Chapter 6, p 144 below.

the second sense, its utility as a concept aiding the analysis of the way an individual or group actually thinks is in doubt. The extent to which the thought of an individual, group or epoch is systematised cannot be presupposed. Certainly the characterisation of the thought of an individual or group, whether or not in terms of Weltanschauung, implies some degree of consistency in the sense of regularity (rather than complete randomness or chaos), and indeed some degree of logical consistency can be expected according to the drives towards personal and interpersonal consistency variously hypothesised by Parsons (1951: 16-17) and Berger and Luckmann (1967: 81ff). Nevertheless such drives must not be assumed to operate unimpeded and to be fully realised: regularity there may be, but that does not presuppose or imply full logical consistency and coherence.

The utility of Mannheim's ideal type of consistent Weltanschauung would be less problematic if he were not so keen to apply it to a whole epoch. (1952: 62) In his later writings, however, he is able to avoid the trap of assuming that all the documentary meanings of a society or epoch will be adequately comprehended in one such Weltanschauung. He is careful to point out that, even where one Weltanschauung dominates an epoch, others remain as under-currents. (1952: 181)[1] This fact may be of vital importance in the development of a particular Weltanschauung, and Mannheim shows this to be the case in his analysis of conservative thought in 'Ideology and Utopia': this thought developed systematically only as a response to Weltanschauungen which challenged the implicit assumptions of the ruling class of the time.[2]

1 This reference is to 'The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge', published originally in 1925, two years after 'On the Interpretation of Weltanschauung', which we have used as the principal reference for this section.

2 See below, p 78

From this analysis of Mannheim's conception of Weltanschauung, we emerge with a concept of world view as an ideal-type, perhaps conceived as too consistent and coherent, but not necessarily restricted to abstract thought, nor necessarily covering the whole of society. World view elements may be action-involved,[1] though of course to be considered as part of the superstructure they would have to be in some way subsequent to or distinct from the substructural action in any particular investigation. Mannheim's conception of world view is clearly not so restrictive as Goldmann's; but perhaps for this very reason it pays the penalty of being a rather loose construction of ill-defined elements. We shall examine the concept of world view in greater depth in Chapter 6, but at this point we must explore the work of other sociologists of knowledge for more specific suggestions as to the nature of the superstructure.

(iii) Berger and Luckmann's Conception of the Superstructure

On comparing Mannheim and Berger and Luckmann one is immediately struck by the common emphasis on consistency in the superstructure - though with Berger and Luckmann there is perhaps an even greater tendency to see consistency as applying to the thought of the whole society, and indeed to its actual thought rather than to an ideal-type thereof. Consistency is moreover an aspect of the substructure for Berger and Luckmann, as we saw in Chapter 2: on the individual level a comprehensive and consistent view of the world is attained through the internalisation of the generalised other; whilst on the social level there is a strain to consistency through mutual biographical reflection, tending towards a fully integrated common-sense reality of everyday life. We also noted however that despite the 'natural' strains to consistency, integration of meaning within a segmented society remains a 'problem':

[1] This is implied in the very concept of documentary meaning, where action is included amongst the documents for world view interpretation.

> 'The segmentation of the institutional order and the concomitant distribution of knowledge will lead to the problem of providing integrative meanings that will encompass the society and provide an overall context of objective sense for the individual's fragmented social experience and knowledge. Furthermore, there will be not only the problem of overall meaningful integration, but also a problem of legitimating the institutional activities of one type of actor vis-à-vis other types. ... multiplication of perspectives greatly increases the problem of establishing a stable symbolic canopy for the entire society.' (1967: 102-3)

It is this problem of integration - which Berger and Luckmann claim arises on the two levels of necessary legitimation (of the institutional order and of the individual biography), and from the exigencies of socialisation (the need to justify the institutional order to a new generation) - which directs Berger and Luckmann's interest in knowledge less directly action-involved: the superstructure for them thus consists principally of legitimations; and its emerging only in response to the problem of integration is consistent with their pragmatic view of consciousness.[1] They claim moreover that to be convincing the legitimations must be consistent and comprehensive (1967: 79): they must uphold the institutional order, which in turn is a shield against the terror of chaos. (1967: 119)[2]

According to Berger and Luckmann there are various levels of legitimation, ranging from those directly involved with everyday action to those of a more abstract theoretical nature, culminating in 'symbolic universes', which refer to realities other than those of everday experience and provide:

[1] See below, Chapter 4, p 90

[2] This sounds somewhat like conservative special pleading: that the terror of chaos will ensue without a firm institutional order upheld by convincing legitimators. It is reminiscent of the choice presented by the German cinema after the First World War, between chaos/anarchy and tyranny. See Kracauer, 1947: 72-74 & passim.

> '... a comprehensive integration of all discrete institutional processes. The entire society now makes sense.' (1967: 121)

Such legitimations may themselves be subject to second-order legitimations if they become problematic. (1967: 123) The more abstract legitimations are normally the responsibility of specialist legitimators, whose typical motivating purpose is integration (1967: 110), and who tend to have logical aspirations (1967: 89) - though Berger and Luckmann's emphasis on consistency might appear to grant such aspirations to everyone.

The question that most clearly emerges from an analysis of Berger and Luckmann's model is to what extent integration is necessary, and indeed necessary for what or for whom. Berger and Luckmann are probably right to point to a tendency towards integration, based on mutual reflection, but how far this reflection goes and how far lack of integration can be tolerated are important variables, which do not seem to be questioned in Berger and Luckmann's extreme integrationist model.

In their emphasis upon legitimations, Berger and Luckmann have certainly indicated an important area of the superstructure. Their contribution would be of greater value, however, if they did not assume the role of legitimations be that of coherent and consistent integrators of the total society. A broader conception of the superstructure with fewer presuppositions might have been offered if legitimations had been seen in the context of a Mannheimian-type Weltanschauung concept; but Berger and Luckmann's concept of Weltanschauung is much narrower, referring to the theoretical interpretations of the world rationally constructed by a few. (1967: 26-27)

The affinity of some of Berger and Luckmann's ideas with the theories of Talcott Parsons has already been noted, and we turn now to a review of Parsons' sociology of knowledge.

(iv) Parsons' Conception of the Superstructure

Although Parsons notes the important role that empirical knowledge plays in rational action (1938: 24), and shows an interest in the sociology of science (1970: 289ff), his principle concern in the sociology of culture is with non-empirical ideas. He sees such ideas -

> '... in relation to the teleological problem of orientation of the actor, the justification of selection of ends to pursue.' (1938: 29)

The aspect of selection is seen where ideas delimit the actor's potential ends/values; where they may further be responsible for the creation of ends/values; and where they may define the means to the achievement of the ends/valus. (1938: 29-30) The aspect of justification is seen where ideas act as legitimations for the actor's ends/values. (1938: 25) It is notable that Parsons' legitimations are not seen in relation to an action one wishes to perform or has performed, but rather justify the ends/values that lead to the action. The picture is of an actor in rational pursuit of ends/values and using ideas to justify his ends - which would contrast with Pareto's less rational actor, less conscious of his motives, attempting to put a logical gloss on his activity. C. Madge would appear to be more sympathetic to the Paretian view, when he points out that ideologies are used more frequently to legitimate social structures than to legitimate values. (1964: 104) Parsons' main interest however is not in the legitimation of values, but in their selection. Values are the central component of his concept of culture, and Parsons emphasises the role of culture in the institutionalisation of values in society. (1970: 284ff; & 1961: 990) The social system consists of roles and norms patterned through culture, and the picture of harmony (which was encountered in Berger and Luckmann) is ensured through Parsons' conception of culture being shared, institutionalised, internalised,

and predominantly normative.[1] Furthermore there are stated to be 'strains to consistency' in each of the personality, social and cultural systems, (1951: 16-17) and, though it is agreed that conflict might arise between the separate strains, there is little provision in Parsons' model for anything but full integration.

Despite the obvious faults in Parsons' system, his model may be of use in supplying an extreme ideal-type of social integration, and in its analysis of some of the ways in which ideas may influence action. Parsons also provides an interesting differentiation of superstructural elements, which we shall review in Section (viii) of this chapter. But in his general characterisation of the superstructure, Parsons contributes little to the sociology of knowledge as we see it, as the conditioning of ideas through social action is not apparent in his work: ideas appear to be autonomous elements patterning a substructure of which they remain independent. This perspective is apparent even in his more recent work on evolution, in which culture assumes a predominant and relatively autonomous controlling role. (1966: especially 113-4).

(v) Culture and Society: The Theme of Utility

In Parsons' work the (autonomous, normative and institutionalised) nature of culture is clearly related to its role in society. This point applies equally to the very different system of Max Scheler. Scheler's is very much a sociology of knowledge, and his sharp distinction between the ideal and the real may have arisen partly from an attempt to protect knowledge from the dangers of relativism. The relatively autonomous knowledge and culture of Scheler and Parsons contrast with the elements of the superstructure emphasised by most sociologists of knowledge: these elements tend to be those upon which substructural elements have the greatest influence, as is perhaps to be expected where this influence is precisely the object of interest.

[1] See especially Parsons, 1951: Chapter 8.

The predominant theme in the characterisation of the superstructure by sociologists of knowledge is that of utility: i.e., what is stressed is that which is in some way useful in relation to the substructure. This perspective is particularly apparent in the pragmatic conception of knowledge. Here we may introduce a distinction between material pragmatism and ideal pragmatism. This relates to the idea that groups are 'committed' to certain intellectual standpoints: as Mannheim points out,

> '... it is not only interests that combat interests, but world postulates compete with world postulates.' (1952: 185)

We have already seen, in relation to Mannheim's work,[1] how some knowledge is developed as a response to the need to perform certain actions to solve problems deriving from the subjective interests of a group in a given situation: a certain amount of knowledge is essential in order to carry out such activities. This type of knowledge we may call materially pragmatic. Ideally pragmatic knowledge, on the other hand, develops when the goals and values of a group are challenged, thus requiring legitimations of a higher degree. This distinction may be illustrated by an example from Mannheim's own work. Conservative thought, Mannheim points out is originally the sort of knowledge giving practical control: it is materially pragmatic knowledge. However,

> '... the counter-attack of opposing classes and their tendency to break through the limits of the existing order causes the conservative mentality to question the basis of its own dominance, and necessarily brings about among the conservatives historical-philosophical reflections concerning themselves. Thus there arises a counter-utopia which serves as a means of self-orientation and defence.' (1936: 207)

Thus opposing ideas raise the problem for conservatives of legitimising the status quo, something which otherwise they would not have needed to do:

[1] See above, Chapter 2, p 32

> '... human beings do not theorize about the actual situations in which they live as long as they are well adjusted to them. They tend, under such conditions of existence, to regard the environment as part of a natural world-order which, consequently, presents no problems.'
> (1936: 206)

The legitimations which the conservatives are forced to develop are thus ideally pragmatic.

A situation in which we might see a development of materially and ideally pragmatic knowledge would be the case in which a certain 'system of actions' is no longer feasible, and thus the goals which were realised in this system must now be otherwise attained. This will mean the development of another system and the essential knowledge (materially pragmatic) associated with it and, since the old legitimations may now no longer apply, it may be necessary to formulate new legitimations for this system (ideally pragmatic).

Thus, in the pragmatic conception of consciousness, 'knowledge' is seen as developing as a response to either material or ideal problems. Materially pragmatic knowledge appears to form part of the substructure, due to its direct relationship with action. Ideally pragmatic knowledge, will consist largely of legitimations, which we have found to be stressed by both Mannheim and Berger and Luckmann, and which indeed have been the most widely emphasised element of the superstructure: practically every sociologist of knowledge has been concerned with legitimations in one form or another, though what is considered to be legitimated varies considerably. Pareto's derivations, for instance, might justify the actions of an individual, group or a whole social system; whilst Marxists stress the role of ideologies in rationalising the interests of classes; and Berger and Luckmann and Parsons give emphasis to legitimations which integrate the whole society. The substantive models thus tend to have too narrow a view of the social role of legitimations: as

so often, we find that ideal-types which offer suggestions concerning social processes are presented as general models of universal applicability.

Pareto, in addition to going beyond other theorists in his less restricted conception of the potential role of legitimations, carries the principle of utility further in his analysis of theories under the 'aspect of utility'. (1966: 170) One of the conclusions of such an analysis is that ideas may be adopted for their utility in engendering or strengthening (i.e. in promoting) certain sentiments and attitudes: such utilitarian adoptions we shall call 'promotions'. Promotions may be related to ideological power and manipulation when the sentiments and attitudes affected belong to those one wishes to influence; but where one's interest is in the development of ideas in relation to action/situation and directly involved consciousness, one is likely to be more concerned with the case where the sentiments/attitudes influenced are those of the adopting person himself. Here promotions may provide or strengthen motivation towards, or combat motivation against, an action one wishes to or has to perform; rather in the same way as 'vocabularies of motive' may be necessary to provide legitimate accounts of motivation before the action. (Mills, 1972: 396)

At first sight it would appear that promotions and vocabularies of motive cannot be part of superstructural consciousness, since the latter seems to carry the implication of being in some way 'subsequent' to the action in the substructure (i.e., developed from action-involved consciousness); or of being somehow 'distinct', for instance through being more abstract. Neither promotions nor vocabularies of motive are necessarily subsequent to the action concerned,[1] and it is arguable whether

[1] Nonetheless, if these concepts are to fall within our sphere of interest, they must at least be subsequent in the sense of being influenced by the action process (including the necessity or desire to act), even though they need not necessarily be subsequent to the completed action. If we were concerned with superstructural/

they are directly involved with action or are in some way distinct from it. The question whether they have a place in the superstructure would appear to depend on a different criterion: i.e., the degree to which they function more widely in the actor's consciousness than merely in relation to the action concerned.

(vi) 'Width' as a Criterion of Superstructural Consciousness

Our criterion for the inclusion of an element in the superstructure is thus that it involves a wider area of the actor's consciousness than that directly related to the substructural action/situation. This means that vocabularies of motive, promotions and even materially pragmatic knowledge, though potentially part of the substructure through direct action-involvement, may also be considered part of the superstructure if of wider significance in the actor's consciousness.

To summarise our conclusions so far on the elements of the superstructure, we should say that they include, where of wider significance than merely in relation to the substructural action: a) pragmatic knowledge, b) legitimations (whether pre- or post-action and including vocabularies of motive), and c) promotions. These three elements reflect the theme of utility in characterisations of the superstructure: they are utilitarian developments of wider consciousness through material pragmatism (pragmatic knowledge, pre-action legitimations and promotions necessary to carry out the action) and ideal pragmatism (legitimations after the event). A fourth element must however be included, unrelated to utility: d) extensions of the consciousness involved in the substructure. Such extensions may be so widened from the original consciousness as to form broad perspectives on reality as in Mannheim's concept of

superstructural/
consciousness uninfluenced by the action process, we should be broadening our present interest to include the independent influence of ideas upon action.

Weltanschauung. Whether or not they develop into world views, such extensions form a necessary element of the superstructure if: a) the superstructure is defined in terms of the wider development of consciousness from that involved in the substructural action/situation; and b) such a development is not assumed to be necessarily utilitarian. Aspects of the consciousness of the other three (utilitarian) elements of the superstructure may of course also be extended.

Having delineated the general elements of the superstructure, we shall in the next two subsections look at further differentiations of the superstructure suggested by the theorists most concerned with the 'knowledge' part of the sociology of knowledge: Scheler and Parsons.

(vii) Further Differentiations of the Superstructure: Scheler

Perhaps Scheler's principal value as a sociologist of knowledge lies in his distinction between the conditioned and autonomous aspects of knowledge. Scheler's sociology of knowledge aims to discover which aspects of knowledge remain independent of social conditioning, which aspects we should concentrate on in our search for social influence, and what relations exist between the conditioned and autonomous aspects of knowledge. (1970a: 163)

Scheler considers that what is socially conditioned, or more precisely co-determined by the social structure and the preceding intellectual history (Staude, 1967: 165), is the perspective on reality, in terms of both form of cognition[1] (i.e. the way in which the knowledge is sought and organised) and content (i.e. the objects of knowledge: what the knowing is directed towards). (Scheler, 1970b: 175) The actual content of knowledge however, and the essence of the more general forms of

[1] Cf. Goldmann's concept of 'significant categorial structures' - 1967: 495.

knowledge (1970a: 164), remain unconditioned. These latter, perhaps better called basic modes of knowledge to avoid confusion with forms of cognition, are of a definite character independent of extrinsic factors, though their actualisation may be socially determined. Scheler lists seven modes of knowledge of increasing 'artificiality', from myth to technology (1970: 178-9), and emphasises in particular the three modes of 'higher' knowing: religion, metaphysics and science. (1970b: 180ff) As an indication of the autonomy of the latter he shows that the form of their social organisation depends in part upon their intrinsic nature: this is one of the most impressive contributions of his sociology. (1970a: 165-9) In similar fashion Cassirer claims intrinsic distinctions between the various cultural powers of man: language, art, religion, science.

> 'These cannot be reduced to a common denominator. They tend in different directions and obey different principles.'
> (Cassirer, 1970: 252)

As stated above, Scheler also claims autonomy for the 'content' of knowledge, by which he means the actual knowledge revealed through one's perspective, and the validity of this knowledge (1970b: 175) Whilst to dispute this claim would mean falling into the trap of relativism, the major limitation of Scheler's sociology of knowledge is here disclosed, i.e. that it is a sociology of knowledge in a relatively narrow sense. The following quotation illustrates this still further:

> 'After all, the sociology of knowledge has for its subject not only the sociology of knowledge of truth but also the sociology of social delusion, of superstition, of the sociologically conditioned errors and forms of deception.' (1970b: 178)

This quotation shows Scheler's literal reading of the sociology of knowledge, since he does not mention ideal elements to which the categories of truth and error are inapplicable, e.g. concepts of value or appreciation. This may be partly due to Scheler's metaphysics which, like Rickert's, includes

an absolute order of unversally valid hierarchical values (Dahlke, 1940: 74), to which concepts of verity are thus applicable. If we reject this metaphysics (which would for instance apply standards of truth and falsehood to a discipline like ethics) we may find concepts of objective validity to be irrelevant to, for instance, normative ideas; and the content of some superstructural consciousness to be far less autonomous than Scheler suggests, unless we limit ourselves as he does to the analysis of truth content.

In summary, despite its limitations Scheler's work provides some useful and interesting differentiations of consciousness: the distinction between the form and objects of cognition; the intrinsic analysis of basic modes of 'knowing'; the anti-relativistic emphasis on the independent truth-content of knowledge.

(viii) Further Differentiations of the Superstructure: Parsons

Parsons classification of ideas is related to his differentiation of action-involved consciousness, as outlined most fully in Chapter 1 of 'The Social System'. Here he distinguishes between two types of orientation of the actor; motivational- and value-orientation, and, within these two types, three basic 'modes' of orientation. The three modes of motivational-orientation are the cognitive, cathectic and evaluative (1951: 7), the first concerning the definition of the situation according to the actor's interests; the second having relevance for the 'gratification-deprivation balance of his personality'; and the third being a process of selection amongst the alternative possible actual orientations according to criteria or 'values'. This third mode of motivational-orientation is also itself the other major type of orientation, and is again subdivided into three modes (1951: 13): cognitive (concerning the validity of cognitive judgements), appreciative (where normative criteria

are applied to cathectic attitudes and objects), and moral (concerning the application of standards for the integration of cognitive and cathectic interests).

If we look closely at Parsons' distinctions, the term 'motivational-orientation' would seem inappropriate: since one intends action towards objects, all action-orientation to object-ego relations must by definition in some sense by 'motivational' (and if this were not the case, and 'motivational' were to be more narrowly defined, it would not then anyway be suitable for the general designation of the basic modes of orientation to objects). We should replace this term by 'modes of action-orientation to objects' (objects in relation or intended relation to the actor).

It is also clear that evaluative criteria can be applied to all the types of judgement made in the basic modes of action-orientation to objects, and that the use of such criteria therefore does not itself constitute a basic mode of action-orientation. There does however appear to be a third possible basic mode of action-orientation beyond the cognitive and cathectic, namely the moral.[1] And just as cognitive and cathectic standards may be applied to the cognitive and cathectic orientation-judgements, so may moral standards be applied to moral orientation-judgements (standards of good and bad may be applied in the judgements as to whether the supposed action-relation of the object to ego is good or bad).

The process of evaluation according to value criteria is clearly a rational one, and as such cannot be seen as the only or even as a necessary determinant of the actor's orientation-judgements. Parsons would do well here to look at Pareto's account of non-logical action.

[1] Note that, in contrast to Parsons' usage, this concept has no necessary emphasis on integration.

While an orientation-judgement must be conscious for us to include it under 'modes of action-orientation to objects' (since by the term 'action' we exclude behaviour of the stimulus-response and less conscious habitual types), the determinants of the judgement may be more or less conscious, though of course the actor may have conscious evaluative criteria even if they do not come into play in determining his judgements. Thus it would be possible to examine the degree of rational connection between the conscious evaluative criteria and the judgements made, and the degree of consistency and coherence between the various conscious evaluative criteria. Furthermore standards of one type (e.g. of truth) may affect individual orientation-judgements of another type (e.g. moral); and of course in a specific situation in which all the types of orientation-judgement are involved, all three specific judgements may be mutually determinant.

There remains the question as to the utility of Parsons' distinctions. It seems to be frequently impossible in practice, and indeed of doubtful value, to distinguish cathectic and moral action-orientations, to separate the cathectic and moral reasons for striving after certain ends. It is often the case that an action or its intended result is of 'value' to the actor in a broad sense including the moral and the cathectic. It may therefore be preferable to subsume cathectic and moral judgements involved in action-orientation under the concept of evaluations (distinct from Parsons' use of the term), thus leaving a distinction between the cognitions and evaluations involved in action (e.g. as in the pragmatic knowledge of the means to one's ends and the evaluative ordering of these means).

It is perhaps noteworthy that, in his classification of ideas, Parsons himself concentrates on the cognitive (or 'existential') - evaluational (or 'normative') distinction. In 'The Role of Ideas in

Social Action' he also mentions imaginative ideas, but as indices of sentiments and attitudes rather than themselves playing a positive role. (1938: 21) In Chapter 9 of 'The Social System' he conducts a separate analysis of expressive symbol systems, which he sees in terms of the communication of affect, with 'pure art' being totally expressive and hence non-evaluative. (1951: 410-411)[1] These separate analyses allow him to base his classification of ideas on the principal existential-evaluational distinction, with a subdivision of empirical-non-empirical. Four categories of beliefs are thus created: empirical existential (science and equivalents), non-empirical existential (philosophy), empirical evaluational (ideology), and non-empirical evaluational (religious ideas). (1951: 331) This categorisation seems unsatisfactory: for instance, cannot philosophical belief systems have evaluational aspects, and why are religious ideas not joined in the non-empirical evaluational category by other types of moral belief system? Parsons' categorisation contradicts even his own earlier description of Weber's studies of religion as dealing with non-empirical existential ideas. (1938: 28) This is perhaps the best illustration of the fact that, whilst the cognitive and evaluative components of action-orientations may be capable of analytical distinction, to distinguish between existential and evaluative belief systems may prove impossible in practice. Similarly Dahlke's sharp division between two of his spheres for research, the theoretical contemplative and the ideal normative, is untenable. (Dahlke, 1940: 86) Berger and Luckmann make a similar cognitive-normative distinction with respect to legitimations, and claim that:

> '... 'knowledge' precedes 'values' in the legitimation of institutions.' (1967: 111)

But Madge points out that social beliefs are generally cognitive and evaluative, and indeed finds the normative - nonnormative distinction

[1] Parsons' view of art thus contrasts with the more value-oriented conceptions of art that are reviewed in Chapter 11 - See below, p 272

largely irrelevant. (1964: 103) Parsons should perhaps have taken a hint from the following statement he himself makes in Chapter 1 of 'The Social System':

> 'There must, therefore, in an action system, be a paramount focus of evaluative standards which are neither cognitive as such nor appreciative as such, but involve a synthesis of both aspects. It has seemed appropriate to call these moral standards'.
> (1951: 13-14)

Whilst we should dispute that the moral constitutes a synthesis of the cognitive and appreciative, Parsons is clearly close here to the recognition that the cognitive and evaluative may be fused in the same concept, let alone the same belief system.

(ix) Conclusion

In this chapter we have explored conceptions of the superstructure in the sociology of knowledge, in terms both of the basic constitutive elements suggested by various theorists, and of some further differentiations of its aspects. The broadest conception of the superstructure was found to be the Mannheimian notion of 'Weltanschauung', a concept that we shall explore further in Chapter 6. Other views of the superstructure are more limited: Berger and Luckmann indicate the importance of legitimations, but over-emphasise integration. Parsons shares this preoccupation with integration, and, like Scheler, grants a considerable autonomy to cultural elements. Most theorists however stress the less autonomous, utilitarian role of ideas in relation to action. This utilitarianism is particularly evident in the pragmatic conception of knowledge, in relation to which we distinguished between material and ideal pragmatism. Taking 'width' (of functioning in the actor's consciousness) as a criterion of superstructural consciousness, we distinguished three principal utilitarian elements of the superstructure: pragmatic knowledge,

legitimations (pre- or post-action), and promotions - and one non-utilitarian element: extensions. Finally, we looked at further differentiations of the superstructure in the work of Scheler and Parsons - the two theorists most concerned with the sociology of knowledge. Scheler was seen to distinguish several interesting aspects of 'knowledge' (defined in a rather strict sense), including for instance 'forms of cognition', a concept that we shall consider further in a section on 'concepts of consciousness form' in Chapter 6.[1] Parsons' differentiation of ideas was deemed less useful, though the distinction between cognitive and evaluative aspects of action is found to be useful at several points in this thesis.

Having indicated in this chapter an analytical conception of the superstructure in the sociology of knowledge, we are now able to look more directly at suggested relations between substructure and superstructure.

[1] See below, p 136 ff

# CHAPTER 4: RELATIONS BETWEEN SUBSTRUCTURE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

## Why the Substructure Influences the Superstructure

Some of the approaches to be discussed in this chapter have been dealt with at least in rudimentary form in Chapters 2 and 3. This is particularly the case with respect to the question why the substructure influences the superstructure: the very concepts used to describe superstructural elements, legitimations for instance, imply the motivation that gives rise to them. The superstructural elements that we distinguished in Chapter 3 thus reveal two major types of explanation of their existence: a). in terms of utility/pragmatism; b). in terms of 'extensions' of substructural consciousness.

We have noted the prevalence of the pragmatic theory of the superstructure, in which consciousness is seen to develop if of use in resolving the actor's problems. To a large extent the work of Marx, Pareto, Goldmann, Mannheim and Berger and Luckmann is imbued with this perspective. Dahlke however is critical of what he calls the pragmatic bias in the sociology of knowledge, as it tends to derogate contemplative or theoretical thinking. (1940: 85) This criticism certainly applies where there is overriding concern for materially pragmatic knowledge, i.e. where it is considered that knowledge is oriented in its content to the achievement of the actor's ends, and will only be developed if it fails its role in this achievement, or if the actor develops new ends, and thus new problems, which require new knowledge:

> 'Typically, I have little interest in going beyond this pragmatically necessary knowledge as long as the problems can indeed be mastered thereby. ... The validity of my knowledge of everyday life is taken for granted by myself and by others until further notice; that is, until a problem arises that cannot be solved in terms of it.'
>
> (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 57-8)

However, the notion of the pragmatic foundation of knowledge may be so broad as to claim merely that knowledge is not just picked up or retained for no reason, but is gained intentionally, a process which can be readily translated into the language of problems. This may be extended to cover intellectual problems (thus perhaps taking the sting from Dahlke's criticism), but such an approach would go beyond the kind of utilitarian explanations prevalent in the sociology of knowledge, since such explanations, when seen in terms of an interest in intellectual ideas, confine the interest to those ideas that are of fairly strictly defined use to the actor. Dahlke would wish it to be agreed that such utilitarian interest may be extended to areas of non-utilitarian knowledge, or indeed that a non-utilitarian interest in 'knowledge for its own sake', i.e. intellectual curiosity, is possible. Dahlke's view could of course be subsumed under the broad pragmatic conception of knowledge, yet even this perspective could be rejected as too narrow on the grounds that knowledge may just be picked up and retained out of habit, without its being useful even in the broadest sense. Similarly, knowledge may be acquired not through the intrinsic pragmatic aspects of its content, but for its extrinsic, e.g. status, aspects. Thus even the broad pragmatic notion of knowledge must not be assumed always to apply, though it is indeed worth applying this rational model as a hypothesis in each case.

The broad pragmatic conception of knowledge does at least provide the framework for a motivational explanation. The motivational bases for 'extensions' are less clear, partly because extensions describe a process of consciousness development rather than explaining it. This process consists of the application of a substructural 'perspective' (including cognitive categories and interests, evaluations etc.) to a wider area, and the selection of those ideas which are consistent with,

or which embody, this perspective. The reasons for such extensions are usually left implicit in theoretical accounts, but they appear to be based upon the priority of the substructural action/situation for the actor, either in the sense that the action/situation is particularly salient for the actor (e.g. where an action is frequently undertaken, or there is strong motivation towards it), or in the sense that the action/situation is temporally prior in the life of the actor. The perspective is thus extended through being frequently, particularly significantly or previously actualised by the actor. None of these modes of extension implies a direct motivational explanation for the extension of consciousness as in the pragmatic model, though the broad pragmatic motion of intentionally acquired 'knowledge' could appear in the extension model as the non-utilitarian extension of a substructural interest.

It is interesting at this point to note how the concept of 'commitment', developed above,[1] may account not only for utilitarian developments of consciousness, such as legitimations and promotions, but also for extensions that derive from actions of particular salience for the actor's ends. The concept of 'commitment' thus offers one particular motivational explanation (without implying direct motivational causation) of both utilitarian and non-utilitarian developments of consciousness: though but one explanation, it may prove to be a very useful one.

The non-utilitarian account of the superstructure in terms of extensions has an affinity with the 'reflection' theory of knowledge, according to which, in its simplest form, the superstructure reflects the substructure. In its most naive form, the reflection theory has no relation to the extension model, as it recognises no consciousness in the

[1] See above, Chapter 2, p 32 ff

substructure. In Scheler's 'Durkheimian sociological correspondence theory of knowledge' (Dahlke, 1940: 73) however, the extension model is clearly used, if not by name. Scheler claims that the structure of a society may be reflected in the forms of cognition of that society (Staude, 1967: 172): this is due to the temporal priority or 'genetic precedence' of knowledge of society, such knowledge becoming extended into general forms of knowing of wider application. (Scheler, 1970b:170-176) Scheler further specifies this process in 'Recht und Unrecht des Soziologismus', where he states -

> '... dass das erste Substrat der Anwendung des Formenapparatus von Denken, Schauen, Werten, Lieben und der zugehörigen Triebstruktur nicht die Natur ist, sondern die Gesellschaft, so dass sich die Organisationsform der Gesellschaft stets auch spiegeln muss in dem ganzen Weltbild.'
> (1960: 426)

So primary social consciousness is extended because society is the first object of application of cognitive forms, so that its forms are taken as being the forms of 'the world'.

Both utilitarian and extension models of the development of superstructural consciousness refer to a meaningful substructure and to a causal substructure-superstructure relationship in which the substructure is a necessary condition. That the substructure is meaningful, that one's principal concern therein may be with an element of consciousness, does not disqualify its status as a precondition.

As for the direction of causality, our interest in the sociology of knowledge does not cover influence in the opposite direction, as in the effects of ideas upon action, except insofar as the determining properties of the idea in relation to the substructure are a reason for its adoption (as in the case of promotions). Similarly, we are not directly interested in the social organisation of 'knowledge', ideological

power, etc., as such. If then our interest lies in the development of 'knowledge' in relation to action/situation and directly involved consciousness, to what extent is the relation direct and unidirectional?

(ii) How Direct and Unidirectional is the Influence?

It is Mannheim who shows most clearly that the relationship between substructure and superstructure cannot be taken as direct and without context. He points out that as 'facts' are discovered by the exponents of one Weltanschauung, the opposing groups have to develop their Weltanschauung in order to account for these facts within their own frame of reference. (1952: 148 & 173) Mannheim shows here the necessity of a structural perspective, in which we analyse the Weltanschauungen as developing not as the isolated responses of different groups, but as mutually affecting each other, in this case through ideal pragmatism.[1] One might add that in a similar fashion the consciousness that an actor develops from a specific action/situation may be influenced in its development by other elements in the actor's world view, especially if he tends to be consistent. The structural perspective may thus apply to the individual as well as to society.

Mannheim also stresses the necessity of a historical perspective, in relation to both the goals and ideas of a group. In the case of goals, and in relation to the concept of 'commitment', one must not assume that the only factor determining the thought of a group is the system of actions which will achieve its goals: one can see from Mannheim's work that the thought of the group will vary according to whether its desired system of actions is already existent, existed in the past, or may exist in the future. Thus the group's ideas do not derive from the

[1] Ideal pragmatism was discussed above in connection with Mannheim's work on the development of conservative thought: see Chapter 3, pp 78-79

desired system of actions alone, divorced from its temporal relationship to the group in question. It is for this reason that Mannheim places such emphasis on the question of whether a group is directed towards maintenance of its surrounding social world or towards changing it (1936: 3), and thus on the concepts of ideology and utopia.

Where the emphasis is on the historical perspective on ideas themselves, we may note Mannheim's point that it is false to regard a Weltanschauung as being created by a social group out of nothing: past intellectual standpoints and theories are taken up by a group, but the function of these ideological remnants is changed simply by being applied to a different situation by a differently situated group, and thus as the function is changed so is the meaning. (1952: 187)

The argument that the ideas of a group should not be assumed to stand in a straightforward relationship to the group's activities is developed by Pareto in his concept of utility[1] - a concept which may help to account for the persistence of otherwise outdated ideas. An instance of this is given by Berger and Luckmann, who point out that an ideology may persist merely through its capacity to serve as a focus of unity for a group, irrespective of its actual content:

> 'Frequently an ideology is taken on by a group because of specific theoretical elements that are conducive to its interests. ... It would be erroneous, however, to imagine that the relationship between an interest group and its ideology is always so logical. Every group engaged in social conflict requires solidarity. Ideologies generate solidarity. The choice of a particular ideology is not necessarily based on its intrinsic theoretical elements, but may stem from a chance encounter. ... There may be large elements in an ideology that bear no particular relationship to the legitimated interests, but that are vigorously affirmed by the 'carrier' group simply because it has committed itself to the ideology.' (1967: 141-2)

[1] See above, Chapter 2, p 29

We can thus reject the conception of a necessarily direct and contextless relationship between substructure and superstructure. And if we look closely at the elements of the superstructure, we must also reject any notion of necessary unidirectionality in the relationship: whilst in the extension model it does seem that consciousness develops in one direction, if we look at promotions and pre-action legitimations we remember that elements of the superstructure may be adopted precisely because of their influence upon substructural action.

(iii) The Degree of Influence

One of the most important aspects of how the substructure and superstructure relate is the degree of substructural influence. We have already indicated that the substructure is a necessary rather than a sufficient condition for the development of any particular superstructural consciousness. This view seems generally shared by sociologists of knowledge: Marx, for instance, writes of limits upon and conditions for the development of ideas;[1] Stark sees modes of action as permissive of several different mental modes, though determination is operative since the mental modes must be able to coexist with the contemporary modes of action (1958: 253-4); and Scheler, as we have seen,[2] envisages social conditions permitting and blocking the development of ideas. According to these views, then, the causal relationship may be as weak as the following: this particular substructure is one which meets some of the necessary conditions for the development of this particular superstructure; and, viewed from the other end, this particular superstructure is one of a finite set of possible developments from this particular substructure. In more particular terms we can see that, for

[1] For example, see Marx on Aristotle - 1972: 30-31.

[2] See above, Chapter 2, p 22

instance, extensions may develop in various but limited ways; that cognitions engendered in the substructure are selective in the acquisition of further knowledge; and that any particular legitimation may be one of a finite number that will justify an action.

Apart from the question of how necessarily the superstructure is a result of the substructure, the question of the degree of substructural influence also refers to how much of the superstructure is determined, how <u>total</u> is the determination. The degree of social determination of thought in this sense is often ignored, e.g. by Mannheim as is seen especially clearly in his notion of the 'total conception of ideology':

> '... the total conception calls into question (an individual's) total Weltanschauung (including his conceptual apparatus), and attempts to understand these concepts as an outgrowth of the collective life of which he partakes. ... the entire mind is to be seen as ideological ... the social situation ... even penetrates to the noological meanings.'
> (Mannheim, 1936: 50 & 68-69)

Thus Mannheim does not allow for different degrees of social determination for different types of thought, and the possibility of relative autonomy for various types of thought. It is here that he is criticised by von Schelting (1934),[1] who points to the relative autonomy of, for instance, logic compared with political views.

In rejecting the 'total conception of ideology' we must recall Scheler's work on the various autonomous aspects of the superstructure, e.g. the character of the basic modes of knowing and the truth-content of ideas. Ideas may however be considered to be independent in ways other than these universally autonomous aspects: an idea may be seen as in some sense pre-existent (independent through its existing before the influence of the substructure), and merely <u>chosen</u> through substructural

[1] A useful discussion of von Schelting's comparison of Mannheim and Weber is to be found in Sahay, 1971.

influence. This conception, in which the selection is believed to be determined rather than the idea itself, is the basis of the theory of elective affinity.

(iv) The Theory of Elective Affinity

The foremost exponent of the theory of elective affinity is Max Scheler. One of the difficulties in the analysis of his work, however, is to decide exactly what kind of 'pre-existence' he grants to ideas, and what effect their selection has upon them. We are variously informed that ideas depend upon substructural factors for their effectiveness, acceptance, realisation or actualisation. Becker and Dahlke for instance seem to confuse realisation and effectiveness in their interpretation of Scheler:

> '... an idea does not have an inherent power to become objective in the world ... In order to be effective in life, it must be bound up with some interest, drive, or tendency, and thereby acquire power and indirect influence.' (1942: 313, my emphasis)

Staude, however, claims that Scheler's Realfaktoren determine the selection of which mind-contents will be actualised at any place and time. (1967: 157-8) The difference in views probably reflects Scheler's own ambiguity: on the one hand ideas exist in a supratemporal sphere of ultimate validity, and are merely actualised when selected by the appropriate substructural conditions; on the other hand, those ideas entertained already by a few intellectuals will not exert any influence on society at large unless in some way linked with the basic drives of the society. Many writers (Marx, Weber and Pareto, for instance) have in fact stressed this last point, that the 'effectiveness' of ideas is dependent upon social factors. To be effective, i.e. to have influence upon social action, ideas must first be accepted, and it is implied that they will not be accepted/adopted unless they have an 'affinity' with

the substructural cognitions/evaluations of those concerned. As for how the ideas themselves are engendered, Weber would seem to see the possibility of independent genesis, (Staude, 1967: 163-4) i.e. cultural development through intellectual curiosity and the like: whilst Scheler would emphasise the possibility of social influence upon genesis, i.e. in the selection from the ultimate store (Staude, 1967: 165); and others would claim that ideas may develop entirely within the sphere of social determination. Assuming that to accept the second position would not imply full acceptance of Scheler's metaphysics of the 'absolute natural Weltanschauung' (Staude, 1967: 155), and that to accept the third position would not imply a materialist determinism, we should not want to reject any of the possibilities suggested by these three perspectives: we should only want to reject the one extreme view that there can be no development from the substructure itself (which would mean rejecting the notion of extensions), and the other extreme of total social determination of the superstructure.

If we enquire as to the degree of consciousness of the selection process in Scheler's model, we find two apparently contradictory answers: on the one hand Scheler grants to individuals the ability to select from the ultimate store of ideas those that have an affinity with their interests; on the other hand, blind impulses appear to choose which ideas will be actualised. (Dahlke, 1940: 74) These two perspectives may be made compatible if we see the real conditions of society as a whole, as determined by the Triebstruktur, as delimiting the potential actualisation of ideas, partly through their co-determination (with previous intellectual history) of the forms of cognition; and the prevailing interests of the elite as deciding which of the potential ideas shall be actualised, through selection of the objects of cognition.

In all this description of the process of selection, the power of ideas themselves appears to be negligible. Scheler however insists that ideas are capable of guiding and directing (Leitung und Lenkung) the blind impulses. (Scheler, 1960: 40) Thus an idea may be put forward which is able to channel the energy of some non-specific drive and to direct it in the manner prescribed by the idea. With more specific impulses ideas can only hinder or encourage. Throughout his description of the power of ideas, however, ideas are seen in substantive terms as disembodied beings, with strictly limited power and yet desiring influence. It is not clear whether an idea attempts to find a suitable drive to bring itself to fruition, or whether the idea is elected by the drive with or without the intention of using the guiding and directing power of the idea. If the former is the case, then the idea must exist already: but in what form? Scheler's disembodied ideas and blind impulses seem metaphysical worlds apart; but if we take his less extreme components, namely the prevailing interests of the elite and the ideas engendered through cultural development, then, in terms of Scheler's conception of elective affinity and the limited power of mind, only those ideas will be sustained which have relevance for the achievement of the aims of the elite, and these ideas further specify (channel) the aims and encourage their achievement. Scheler might even agree that the existing ideas of the elite may hinder the achievement of their ends, though this would seem to counter his argument that only those ideas are selected or maintained that have an affinity with the elite's interests. The implication would appear to be that the elite may not simply be able to select ideas directly from the range of the potential, but that they must make do with selecting from the range actually presented by the cultural development, and that this range may indeed not give free rein to the drives and interests concerned. Whether Scheler

sees ideas as capable of developing on their own, without selection by the 'real' forces of society, is unclear: Cassirer certainly thinks not, and thus criticises Scheler on this point for failing to acknowledge the 'formative' power of 'Spirit' (Cassirer, 1949: 868-9), as in the development of ideas through intellectual curiosity. But neither Scheler nor Cassirer seem willing to grant spirit 'effective' power, as in a concept of spiritual motivation, or the creation of interests by ideas: in the recognition of this possibility Weber reveals his less restricted conception of the power of ideas, though he would rightly reject some of Scheler's extreme claims for the autonomy of mind/spirit, particularly in the sphere of values.

One of the aspects of the theory of elective affinity that is frequently ignored is the question of the nature of the affinity, i.e. why the ideas are selected. It seems that here again one may apply the correspondence or utilitarian models: those ideas will be selected a) which 'correspond' to the substructural consciousness, i.e. which are consistent with, or which embody, this consciousness; or b) which perform a useful function in relation to the substructure, e.g. in supplying legitimations or in strengthening the motivation towards a necessary action. Once again one must be careful to avoid the implication that the whole idea is related in this way to the substructure: in general an idea is selected because aspects thereof have an affinity with the substructure: other aspects of the idea are either ignored, or adopted as part of the package. This may result in the interesting phenomenon of the independent effect of those aspects for which the idea was not selected. This view of the process of elective affinity goes beyond that of Stark, who sees the process as one of gradual mutual adjustment (1958: 265), hence underrating the potential radical influence of ideas with their unintended consequences. The theory of elective

affinity should certainly not be seen as postulating a necessary consistency between action and ideas. Madge's version of the utilitarian model of elective affinity constitutes a worthy caution to those who find consistency and rationality wherever they look: he states that most commonly individuals have an 'opportunistic' orientation towards ideas, in the sense that -

> '... in situations where an idea is needed, the individual will take whatever is offered, but on another occasion will take another idea without awareness of inconsistency.' (Madge, 1964: 127)

(v) Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined descriptions and explanations of the substructure-superstructure relationship, and have found once more that the assumptions and implications of most models are over-restrictive, whilst often supplying useful views of possible modes of relationship. Through the comparison and critique of various theories we have thus arrived at a more adequate conception of the complexities, subtleties and possible variations in substructure-superstructure relationships. We distinguished between utilitarian and extension modes of development of superstructural consciousness, and emphasised the structural and historical context of the development and persistence of ideas. We suggested that the relationship between substructure and superstructure is not necessarily undirectional, as witnessed in certain of the elements of the superstructure suggested in Chapter 3 (promotions and pre-action legitimations). We noted that a particular substructure is generally seen as a necessary rather than a sufficient condition for the development of a particular superstructure, and that the degree of influence of substructure on superstructure may thus be limited - and indeed is limited still further if we abandon the assumption of 'total' determination.

Finally we looked at an important model of substructure-superstructure relations, that allows for the relative autonomy of ideas: the theory of elective affinity.

Having completed our exploration of general conceptions of substructure and superstructure in the sociology of knowledge, we may now progress in Part II to the investigation of the potential relations between a particular analytical substructure ('class') and superstructure ('world view').

## P A R T  II : CLASS AND WORLD VIEW AS SUBSTRUCTURE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

## INTRODUCTION TO PART II

In Part I we developed an analytical substructure-superstructure distinction for the sociology of knowledge. This distinction will now be applied in Part II to our particular area of interest in the sociology of knowledge: the development of consciousness from class elements.

In Chapter 5 an attempt is made to advance a refined conception of class. Starting with Weber's concept of class, we elaborate the principal elements of situation, action and consciousness that must be distinguished when viewing class as a substructure of thought.

In Chapter 6, 'world view' is taken as potentially the widest and least constricting conception of superstructure - though certain definitions of world view are rejected for their restrictive assumptions. The concept of world view is refined, not through assuming ideal-typical consistency and coherence, but through developing concepts that encourage consideration of its meaningful, stylistic and structural properties.

In Chapter 7, a formal model is elaborated for the analysis of world view developments from class elements. This model is conceived in terms of ideal-typical actors, yet, despite its methodological individualism, is able to take account of social groups and social systems. More particularly, Chapter 7 distinguishes types of 'class contact', and 'points of development' of world view from class; applies the concepts of consciousness, that were put forward in Chapters 3 and 6, to the investigation of the development of world view; and (as in Chapter 4) emphasises the structural and historical context of world view developments.

## CHAPTER 5: THE SUBSTRUCTURE AS 'CLASS'

### (i) Introduction

In the introduction to Part I it was mentioned that the substructure should not necessarily be taken to refer to the whole of society, but rather it may refer to a particular set of social factors, such as those associated with the concept of 'class'. In this chapter we shall look at class as a substructure of thought, largely in the light of the investigations in Chapter 2. From the approach so far it would seem that the Weberian conception of class would be the most suitable for our purposes, and we shall thus commence with a detailed analysis of this conception, which will then be broadened into a view of class that is adequate for the furtherance of the kind of sociology of knowledge proposed in Part I.

### (ii) Weber's Concept of Class

Weber states his basic conception of class most concisely in the following statement:

> 'We may speak of a 'class' when (1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, in so far as (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labour markets.' (1948: 181)

This statement must, however, be considerably amplified for a full understanding of its subtleties and implications, and for any necessary additions or modifications to be made.

#### A. 'a specific causal component of their life chances'.

The term 'life chances' is highly unspecific, its vagueness being increased by defining it partly in terms of 'personal life experiences'.

(1948: 181) It seems probable however that Weber preferred such an ambiguous term to a specific reference, for instance to the individual's financial situation. For Weber, class isolates conditions of the actions that determine or constitute one's life chances: i.e. class factors condition not only how much money the actor obtains, but how he has to gain it, and the extent of his security and prospects. Weber is not concerned with a further specification of 'life chances', as his interest is in certain conditions of economic action, rather than in the economic action itself or its results. In this way Weber distinguishes himself from those who would include aspects of work, financial situation etc. in their conception of class.

Weber certainly sees class as 'conditioning' rather than determining:

> '... the kind of chance in the market is the decisive moment which presents a common condition for the individual's fate.'
> (1948: 182, my emphasis)

This concern with the conditions of action is paralleled in Marx, where he writes of the connection of the social and political structure with production:

> 'The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really are; i.e. as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will.'
> (1965: 36-37)

Class, then, for Weber is not in itself an ideal-type, but rather an aspect of economic action, in so far as it isolates a certain set of relevant conditions for such action. In order for class situation to condition life chances, however, two further factors are necessary, involving:

a) the economic cognition and motivation of the actor: he may be more or less aware of his market potentialities, and more or less keen in the disposal of his goods and skills, and thus he may make more or less efficient use of the goods and skills of which he takes account for market action;

b) limits, for instance of a status, political or legal kind, to the possibilities of his disposal of goods and services. Only when class is combined with relatively high economic motivation and a market relatively free from such limits as we have mentioned is it possible for class position to act as a determinant of life chances to any significant degree. Although class situation is only an aspect of economic action, an ideal-typical situation could be conceived (where the pure effects of class would be most strongly apparent) in which the only conditions relevant to the actor's economic action were those isolated by the concept of class.

B. 'economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income'.

1) 'goods and opportunities for income' - elsewhere[1] called goods and skills/services.

It is impossible to know what goods and skills an individual has objectively. In the case of skills this is for two reasons: a) since one may have a skill without having a formal qualification, how would one find out what skills an individual has? and b) even if one was able to determine an individual's skills the individual would not necessarily wish to make economic use of these skills. This is different from being apathetic about the skills one considers in one's market actions, as here it is rather that the individual does not even consider these skills

[1] See Weber, 1947: 424ff.

in his market actions.[1] For instance he may decide to spend a greater or lesser amount of time on market actions, and hence exchange more or less of his services for income. Similarly to decide what goods an individual has will not help us to determine which goods will enter into an assessment of his class position: Weber himself implies that an individual may reserve some of his property for status purposes (1948: 192-3), and such property will thus not become immediately effective through market exchange in conditioning his life chances. Goods and skills per se are thus not determinant of an individual's class position, and can only become such when taken into account by the individual for the purpose of exchange for income on the market. This point is an elaboration of one aspect of Weber's emphasis on the actor's subjective interests in his economic action.

2) 'economic interests'.

In addition to its place in Weber's concise statement of his conception of class that we have quoted above, the notion of 'economic interests' appears in two other related contexts:

> 'According to our terminology, the factor that creates 'class' is unambiguously economic interest, and indeed, only those interests involved in the existence of the 'market'.' (1948: 183)

> ''Classes' are groups of people who, from the standpoint of specific interests, have the same economic position.' (1948: 405, my emphasis)

The only interpretation that seems to fit all of these statements adequately is that goods and skills (even if we specify only those of

[1] Of course, even if we can establish an individual's goods and skills, and ascertain that he considers them in his market action, this does not imply that he is free to make his goods and skills effective through market exchange. One of the conditions of the market is the social recognition of certain goods and skills as valid for exchange; and where the market is not ideal-typically 'free', any particular individual may not have his 'objective' goods and skills recognised, or restrictions may be imposed on their exchange. Limits on the free operation of the market are discussed below, p 113

which the individual takes economic account) per se cannot tell one an individual's class position: but, by assuming an interest in optimalisation of income on the market, one can differentiate class positions according to the kind and value (in terms of the market conditions) of goods and skills the individual has at his disposal, and of course, as we have already pointed out, to have at one's disposal, or more specifically to take into account in one's market actions, is not to assume that such goods and skills are exchanged most effectively. Since 'class position' indicates conditions of action, in order to isolate these conditions of action from the action itself, we must keep the motivation constant. Hence in order to differentiate class positions, horizontally by kind, vertically by value/amount of goods and skills, we keep economic motivation constant in assuming ideal-typical economic motivation. Such ideal-typical motivation allows us to see the effects of class position most strongly, enabling us more clearly to differentiate the various positions. 'Economic interests' in this context thus refers to the market interests (interests in the means of economic advancement in the context of the market) that make one's goods and skills relevant in determining (as conditions) one's life chances. This then is an elaboration of a second aspect of Weber's emphasis on interests in economic action.

Assuming ideal-typical economic motivation, actors in the same class position of course share the same market interests: Weber refers to these as 'class interests', whilst noting the ambiguity of the concept. Empirically it is ambiguous, since:

> 'The class situation and other circumstances remaining the same, the direction in which the individual worker, for instance, is likely to pursue his interests may vary widely ...' (1948: 183)

Thus within each class situation the actors may pursue their interests in a variety of ways: e.g. by competing with others in a similar position, by hoping to gain new goods or skills (e.g. through inheritance or education/

training), or by cooperating to jointly raise the market value of the goods or skills or to modify their distribution (e.g. redistribution of property, professionalisation).

Theoretically the concept of 'class interests' is problematic, since one should not necessarily assume individualistic economic motivation: the actor may identify with a certain group (e.g. kin or community) and wish primarily for economic advance for them. The only solution to this is to push individualistic economic motivation to its limit as a causal component, and investigate the various potential means of economic advance given ideal-typical individualistic economic motivation with reference to class position. One may then see the identification and solidarity with certain groups as such means and the result of such means. If the concept of 'class interests' is made theoretically pure in this way, its status is no longer problematic, as one does not assume such ideal-typical motivation in the real situation. The concept of 'class interests' is thus justified not in terms of the 'real' or 'true' interests of those sharing a class position, but rather in terms of those actors sharing a similar set of potential means to individualistic economic ends. It is for this reason that it is not only the value/amount of goods and skills that is relevant, but also the kind (Weber, 1948: 182), since those with different types of goods and skills, even if they are equivalent in terms of present market value, will have different potential means to economic advance: they may wish to raise the market value of their own skills, for instance, and in certain cases this might be in direct opposition to the desire of others (with different skills but of the same present value) to increase the value of their skills on the market. It is interesting to note that Marx makes a similar distinction to Weber's between amount and kind of goods and skills when he asks what constitutes a class, and answers:

> 'At first glance - the identity of revenues and sources of revenue.' (Marx, 1959: 863)

C. 'under the conditions of the commodity or labour markets'

We have already seen how class situation is defined in terms of conditions of market action. Weber emphasises throughout, in his conception of class, the importance of the idea of economic power in terms of exchange relationships:

> 'The communal action that brings forth class situations ... is an action between members of different classes.' (1948: 185)

Two examples of types of individuals who thus do not qualify for analysis in terms of class position are: Robinson Crusoe (he is not involved in exchange relationships - his economic power is not determined by the value of his goods and skills on any market); and Marx's peasants:

> 'The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions, but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse ... Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society.' (Marx, 1963: 123-4)

The notion of economic power in exchange relationships is not, however, sufficiently precise for the pure effects of class to be seen: for this, such exchange relationships must in certain important ways remain unlimited.

The two possible relevant ways in which exchange relationships may be limited (the two modes in which the market may be rendered less free) can be seen if 'freedom of the market' is defined in terms of: a) extent (lack of conventional or legal limits to possible exchange relationships. It must be remembered that such limits may indeed lead to lack of demand, but the question here is one of formal freedom, 'formal' being extended to include conventional); b) exchange rates (lack of determination of actual rate or control over fluctuation).

The market is still 'formally free' however when limits on extent, or fixity of exchange rates, derives from economic power inherent in the market value of goods and services, as in the setting up of monopolies or 'closed shops'.

Why is it, though, that the market must be free for the pure effects of class to be seen? The answer to this lies in the fact that the notion of class implies a specific kind of connection between goods and services on the one hand and income on the other, this connection being in terms of the market value of these goods and services. Class position does not emerge where exchange rates are fixed by means other than economic power, since then any connection between goods/services and income would derive not from the value of the goods and services according to supply and demand, but rather from some other factor such as political power or status. A market that is not formally free has limits on the market forces that constitute the conditions subsumed under 'class', and thus one's class situation is correspondingly less important as a determinant of one's life chances.

> 'Each kind of class situation ... will become most clearly efficacious when all other determinants of reciprocal relations are, as far as possible, eliminated in their significance.' (Weber, 1948: 185)

In a similar fashion, the pure effects of an actor's class position are not seen when the extent of the market is limited by, for instance, status or political party membership: in affecting the possibility of the disposal of goods and skills in demand, such factors act, as we noted in section 'A', as barriers preventing class position from conditioning life chances.[1]

1 We must note, however, that status characteristics may in certain cases be necessary skills for an occupation, e.g. in diplomatic circles.

On the other hand it is a different matter when status or suchlike is essential in order to obtain the qualifications necessary for a desired occupation: the concept of class is applicable only after the goods and skills have been attained, and as long as one is formally free to enter the occupation, then the pure effects of class position can still be seen: such would not be the case only if qualifications were deliberately limited to those of a particular status with a view to preventing others from entering the occupation. Needless to say, the means by which an individual acquired his goods and skills is nevertheless relevant for many analytical purposes.

It is now clear why Weber excludes slaves from consideration as a class.

> 'Those men whose fate is not determined by the chance of using goods or services for themselves on the market, e.g. slaves, are not, however, a 'class' in the technical sense of the term. They are, rather, a 'status group'.'
> (1948: 183)

Slavery is excluded from consideration as a class situation because slaves, whilst they may have varying degrees of skills, cannot exchange them for the benefit of income. They themselves are goods, belonging to an individual, and of which he may despose for the sake of more or less income, depending on the skills of the slave in question. If the slave had skills that were valued because rare, it would make no difference to the degree of his own economic power: i.e. he would still be economically powerless. Whereas if the 'wage-slave', for instance, possessed rare skills he would have the choice whether to use them or not, and thus in order to persuade him to use them for A's benefit, A would have to reward him, since the actor is formally free not to use his skills. While it is thus true that neither slaves nor wage-slaves have economic power, it is for different reasons: wage-slaves have no economic power because the skills they have to dispose of are, in terms of the given rates of exchange on the

market, worthless; while slaves have no economic power because they do not have the power to dispose of the skills they have, however great these may be.[1] Thus the reason why slaves do not constitute a class is because market action is not within their scope: for them the market has no extent. It is precisely because of this, of course, that the economic interests of slaves are of a kind completely different from those of individuals in class positions; and it is this that constitutes the major significance in the contention that slaves are not a 'class'.

Nevertheless it is clear that the life chances of slaves may vary widely; and, in so far as we are interested in relative income, security etc. per se, then we must go beyond class situation, and thus beyond a special set of conditions of economic action, to include within our frame of reference the various forms of economic action open to the actor, and the 'economic situation' that may not only set some of the conditions of economic action but may also (like 'life chances') result from economic action. 'Economic situation', clearly a more specific concept than 'life chances', may be analytically distinguished from economic action, and will thus include relative income (and income-equivalents) and prospects of income (including economic security, for instance, and prospects of promotion). Economic action will then constitute the various ways in which actors may arrive at, maintain or advance from their economic situation. That the distinction between economic situation and economic action can only be analytical is illustrated by the possibility of overtime: overtime is a 'prospect of income' for the actor only if the conditions of his economic action make this means available to him, and if he considers it in his economic action.

[1] This latter point is an exaggeration, since the slave may perform his duties more adequately for better conditions, using tacit or informal bargaining.

Weber would be the first to admit that his conception of class is narrow: indeed it is intentionally so, conceptualised for the specific conditions of market economies. For our purposes a broader conception is necessary, as we do not wish to restrict our framework to the conditions prevailing in a particular place or period. As indicated in the last paragraph, our conception of class will incorporate the more economic aspects of life chances (economic situation) and the various conditions of economic action. What have we gained from the Weberian analysis, however, to incorporate in a wider conception? Our principal gain lies in Weber's general approach to the problem: his methodological individualist[1] analysis of class in means-end terms avoids assumptions regarding group or true interests, and yet stresses the role of subjective interests in economic action, so that class is viewed in a conditioning rather than determining role, and the individual's cognitions and motivations are not epiphenomenal or derivative but central to his action.[2]

In contrast with Goldmann, then, Weber regards class as a category of those sharing certain conditions of action. Weber would include only those cognitions and evaluations that are necessarily involved in membership of this category:[3] his concept of class would thus encompass neither common value- and perspective-responses to these conditions, nor mutually effective behaviour (apart from strictly market relationships). In the terms of

1 See Chapter 7, p 148ff below, for a fuller discussion of our reasons for the adoption of methodological individualism.

2 This Weberian conception of class would be criticised by Parkin for its consideration of 'individual attitudes and perceptions' as 'independent variables'. Parkin suggests that we may generally account for attitude differences in terms of 'distinctively structural factors' so that cognitive variations are seen as 'simply an artefact of variations in the structural location of the individuals concerned'. (1967: 288-9) Needless to say, we do not concur with this standpoint of structural determinism.

3 These cognitions and evaluations would constitute 'basic consciousness' in Goldmann's terms - see above, Chapter 2, p 42

Chapter 2,[1] Weber's conception is thus closer to that of a group type 'a' than Goldmann's definition, whose presuppositions would embrace in 'class' group characteristics of types 'b' and 'c'.

(iii) A Wider Conception of Class

Although we wish to work with a broader conception of class than Weber's, we must retain Weber's careful analytical approach, rather than including within 'class' a wide undifferentiated assortment of variables. Equally we must avoid presuppositions as to the causal significance of various class variables: Ellwood, in criticising the Marxist over-emphasis of the economic, suggests that economic elements may be seen as 'stimuli' ('conditions' in our terminology) which do not necessarily determine responses, especially where the responses lie outside the economic sphere. (1911: 38-40) He does not, however, let this lead him to the conclusion that the economic constitutes a fully insulated province of meaning:[2] on the contrary, one's responses in one sphere may be extended into more general responses in several spheres. Ellwood thus leads us to see that class as a substructure of thought may indeed consist of a relatively autonomous province of meaning,[3] but that superstructural consciousness may develop therefrom in the form of 'extensions'.[4] This conception of class thus concurs with our persistent emphasis in Chapter 2 upon an analytical substructure that is not assumed to be the base reality.

If then we take, as an analytical substructure, a conception of class that is broader than Weber's, the relevant aspects thereof emerge through the recognition of three levels of analysis: the structure of economic

1 See above, p 46

2 Mary Douglas suggests that complete insulation is 'very difficult and unlikely'. (1973: 225)

3 For an elaboration of this concept, see Chapter 8, p 188 below.

4 The concept of 'extensions' was introduced in Chapter 3, p 81 above.

situations, the position in the structure, and the individual in the position.

A. The structure of economic situations: the structure may be characterised according to the following aspects:

1) General structural characteristics - e.g., where discrete positions can be detected, the number of these positions and relative number of occupants of each; and, where hierarchical models are applicable, the degree of incline and relative size of intervals between levels in the hierarchy.

2) Means of attainment of and mobility between economic situations. This indicates the forms of power on which the structure is based. These forms of power may also impose:-

3) Restrictions on the availability and utilisation of means of economic action. Restrictions may be de jure or de facto. The degree of freedom of the market would be included here.[1]

4) Values that economic situations attain (e.g. status). This aspect, whilst indicating the wider significance of economic power in the social structure concerned, does not in itself reveal whether economic power is independent of or derivative from the exercise of other forms of power,[2] as envisaged in aspects 2) and 3).

B. Position in the structure: the analysis of the structure of economic situations is by definition essential just to describe any particular position: each position can be specified only relative to others, and thus only in terms of the general structural characteristics. Furthermore, the

1 Restrictions on the freedom of the market were discussed above, p 113

2 Cf Weber, 1948: 180 - '... the emergence of economic power may be the consequence of power existing on other grounds.'

analysis of an actor's economic situation in its structural context (i.e., according to the structural aspects outlined above) will indicate potential group formations (based upon economic situation or action) in which this actor may become involved.

Through adopting the Weberian emphasis on the conditioning rather than determining role of class, and on the role of subjective interests in economic action, it may be suggested that economic conditions can influence an individual's thought only in working through his meanings and motives. In considering the individual's consciousness involved in his economic situation and action, we may of course discover the 'basic consciousness'[1] simply by looking at the position in the structure; for the actual consciousness involved in the individual's economic situation and action, however, we must examine:-

C. The individual in the position: Some cognitions and evaluations may, then, be necessary for the individual to be in the position at all, but if we are to study the influence of his economic situation and action upon his thought, we cannot neglect the consciousness he brings to the situation (including his values and sentiments) which cannot be derived from an analysis of the position itself. Similarly it may be claimed that any particular economic situation necessarily involves certain forms of experience; but the description of such experience may be infinite unless seen in relation to the individual's actual values amd sentiments.

What then are the fundamental spheres of the individual's economic life that must be taken into account? We have emphasised in earlier chapters both situation and action in the substructure, and in this chapter we have been concerned with elements of economic action (such as means of

1 Namely that consciousness without which the individual would not be able to remain in the economic situation: see the section on Goldmann in Chapter 2, particularly p. 42

social mobility) and economic situation (including structural position and what it attains). We have however neglected the question of what economic action attains, except insofar as this relates to economic situation. In other words, an element we have overlooked consists of the non-economic factors attained by or involved in economic action: this we may call the 'work situation'. The principal elements in our wider conception of 'class', then, include economic situation (and what it attains), economic action (and the conditions thereof, which may include one's present economic situation) and work situation - elements which in other studies of class may be undifferentiated.

Through our analysis and elaboration of Weber's conception of class, we have thus arrived at a framework which bears a strong resemblance to that proposed by Lockwood in his critique of the broad Marxian definition of class. (1958: 13-16) Lockwood analyses 'class position' into 'market situation', 'work situation' and 'status situation'. Under 'market situation' he includes factors (e.g. size and source of income) that we differentiate into economic situation and the conditions of economic action. We are not directly concerned with 'status situation', but recognise that status may be one of the most important qualities that economic situation attains. The closest resemblance between Lockwood's framework and our own lies evidently in the concept of 'work situation' (coined by Lockwood), though Lockwood restricts this concept to -

> '... the set of social relationships in which the individual is involved at work by virtue of his position in the division of labour.' (1958: 15)

Lockwood's emphasis upon social relationships in the work situation clearly derives from his central concern with the conditions of class consciousness: yet in practice he considers aspects of work situation that are not in themselves social relationships - e.g., the developing standardisation of

responsibilities (1958: 82-87), the growth of mechanisation (1958: 87-95) and the degree to which 'instrumental action is at a premium'. (1958: 205). The broader concept of work situation that we have adopted clearly does not confine our analysis to social relationships, but permits the consideration of the actor's experience and evaluation of various other non-economic aspects of his work.

There now arises the question of how one's experience and evaluation of economic situation, economic action and work situation relate to the development of consciousness. 'Experience' here appears to be an umbrella term which, more precisely conceived, relates to the allowance or exclusion of certain kinds of consciousness by conditions that economic situation, action or work situation involve or produce (e.g. economic security, 'free-lance' employment, mechanical labour). Such a process of permission or exclusion is clearly less directly related to a means-end orientation, and is thus closer to the 'perspective' rather than the 'commitment' approach suggested in the section on Mannheim in Chapter 2.[1] An example of where the 'experience' approach is particularly applicable is where economic action is undertaken in an attitude of habit and resignation; or where one's concentration on the economic aspects of the action tends to blind one to the non-economic aspects involved - in such cases the development of consciousness may nonetheless occur through experience of the work situation.

Whilst the development of consciousness through experience suggests a passive orientation to certain conditions (whether through the action being habitual, rather than sentimental or rational, or through its involving unintended consequences), a means-end analysis becomes applicable when we begin to examine the actor's evaluation of his situation

[1] See above, p 31 ff

and action. If we use a rational model (sentiments being sociologically rationalised to values[1]), then the actor's evaluations (in terms of his ends and values) may be seen to apply to both his actual and his possible economic situation and action and work situation: thus his present or an anticipated future economic situation may be his end, while the means thereto is his economic action. We may therefore go beyond a model frozen in time to one which includes process: the economic 'career'[2] of the actor through time. In an analysis which takes account of the subjective (values and ends) and objective (economic situation and what it attains, and conditions of economic action) aspects of economic action, the actor's economic ends cannot be considered as given: they may develop as may his values, through interrelations with the other components of his economic action. In the first place it is clear that economic ends are likely to be chosen which seem feasible within the given conditions of the actor's economic action. But beyond this, if the ends are themselves means of actualising values, then a process of elective affinity may also take place between the ends and the values , where the values are those (other than the purely economic) which economic ends attain in the social structure concerned (e.g. status, opportunities for political power). Those values which are attainable through apparently feasible economic ends are more likely to be adopted by the actor, just as the values which he brings to a situation of alternative means and ends will guide selection amongst these alternatives, and may further lay greater or lesser emphasis on economic ends per se. If the moral and cathectic standards of Parsons' action schema are combined into evaluative standards,[3] the values used by the actor to select between alternative ends and means may be seen as conscious evaluative criteria,

1 On 'sociological rationality' see above Chapter 1, p 15

2 This term is here used in the broad sense, as in Goffman, 1972: 527.

3 As suggested in Chapter 3, p 86 above.

just as adequacy for attaining specific economic ends will constitute for the rational actor the evaluative criteria determining his judgements as to the relevant aspects of the situation and the preferred course of action. The choice of means will also be influenced by the actor's values, particuarly with respect to the non-economic aspects of the means, i.e. the work situation. From the opposite angle, the work situation may itself lead to the adoption of new values, as in the case of a prestigious work situation leading to an emphasis by the actor upon status rather than financial considerations, even if there was little choice in the original decision to take up this work. Over a long time-scale we similarly see that, through the achievement of a new economic situation, the individual's values may develop (in relation to what the new economic situation attains) possibly leading to further economic ends; and his ends may develop (in relation to the conditions of economic action brought about by his new economic situation) possibly leading to the adoption of values that are now attainable: in short, a new economic situation may lead to the development of new ends and values through their becoming feasible together with the fact of their appeal to previously unformulised sentiments. Equally, of course, an altered set of possibilities may render previous ends or values unattainable. Clearly the individual may recognise that a new economic situation may alter his conditions of economic action, and may strive for it for this reason, thus conceiving his action in terms of means to further means.

(iv) Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined the possibility of viewing 'class' as an analytical substructure in the sociology of knowledge. Despite our wish for a broader conception of class than Weber's, we took from Weber's conception the methodological individualist analysis of class in means-end terms (though not excluding the possibility of a more passive orientation to economic and work conditions in terms of 'experience'), the

central role that subjective factors play in economic action, and the view of economic elements as conditioning rather than determining. We emphasised the importance of considering both the objective features of the structure of economic situations, and of any particular position in that structure, and the subjective non-derivative elements that the examination of the individual in the position reveals. We found that the principal elements into which the concept 'class' may be broken down are economic situation (and what it attains), economic action (and conditions thereof) and work situation. There is no necessary implication of solidary group membership in this concept of 'class', and, unlike 'class position', there is no exclusion (in favour of objective conditions) of intrinsic subjective elements, and thus of economic action. Finally we have shown, through the application of a rational model to the actor in the situation, the potential development over time of the subjective and objective components of his economic action, including thus his orientation not only to his actual circumstances but also towards those which are seen as possible, and hence towards which he may be motivated.

## CHAPTER 6: THE SUPERSTRUCTURE AS 'WORLD VIEW'

### (i) Conceptions of 'World View'

The concept of 'world view' emerged as significant in the work of a number of writers studied in Part I. It appears to be one of the broadest conceptions of consciousness and, given our emphasis on 'width' as a criterion of superstructural consciousness, it seems pertinent to analyse the world view concept in greater depth in the attempt to delineate more adequately characteristics of consciousness in the superstructure.

In Part I we refrained from adopting Goldmann's narrow and circular conception of world view,[1] and Berger and Luckmann's notion of Weltanschauung as the property of reason-oriented intellectuals.[2] Mannheim's conception of Weltanschauung appeared more interesting: it did not confine itself to abstract theoretical elements of consciousness, and yet generally managed to avoid the 'holism' that attempts to encompass the consciousness of a whole society.[3] Nevertheless, although an ideal-type concept, its 'rag-bag' of elements of consciousness seemed ill-defined, and it appeared to preclude the formation of an ideal-type of less coherence and consistency. To what extent are these shortcomings characteristic of 'Weltanschauung' as conceived by other writers?

Von Wiesner offers a useful definition of 'Weltanschauung' that, he claims, finds universal agreement:

> 'Was unter Weltanschauung zu verstehen ist, wird allseits völlig übereinstimmend definiert als die Summe oder auch als der Inbegriff aller Ansichten und Meinungen, Behauptungen und Bekenntnisse, welche über Wesen und Bedeutung des Weltganzen mit Einschluss der Menschheit geäussert wurden.' (1911: 173)[4]

1 See above, Chapter 2, p 51 ff.

2 See above, Chapter 3, p 75

3 See above, Chapter 3, p 73

4 'What is to be understood by Weltanschauung is defined with complete agreement on all sides as the sum or indeed as the embodiment of all views and opinions, assertions and avowals which are expressed/

This definition however provides us with two alternative ways of conceiving of the relationship between elements that make up the Weltanschauung: 'Summe' or 'Inbegriff'. Whilst the former would imply the simple addition of elements of consciousness to form thus a 'rag-bag' Weltanschauung, the latter would suggest a closer connection between the elements of consciousness; a summary or sum total rather than a mere sum. In the 'Inbegriff' conception, the Weltanschauung is variously embodied in the manifold perspectives on the world, and is thus a pre-existent essence rather than merely a retrospective summing up for the purpose of description.

The latter conception of Weltanschauung, as a descriptive summation, in fact gives way in the literature to a predominant characterisation of Weltanschauung as a coherent totality. Frischeisen-Köhler, contributing with von Wiesner, Dilthey and others to a collection of readings on the subject, emphasises the unity of Weltanschauung:

> '... die Beziehung auf die Einheit, welche das wesentliche Merkmal jeder Weltanschauung ist ...'
> (1911: x)[1]

Dilthey could not be more clear about his position with respect to the issue of Weltanschauung as summation or totality: die Weltanschauungsgebilden -

> '... sind nach der Gesetzmässigkeit in den Tiefen der Struktur und der logischen Regelhaftigkeit nicht Aggregate, sondern Gebilde.'
> (1911: 15)[2]

- i.e., Weltanschauungen are systematic constructions (rather than mere aggregates) built up in regular stages and through logic. The stages of

expressed/
about the nature and meaning of the universe, including humanity'.

1 '... the relation to unity, which is the essential characteristic of every Weltanschauung ...'

2 Weltanschauung constructions '... are, because of the conformity to law in the depths of their structure and their logical regularity, not aggregates, but systems.'

Weltanschauung construction occur in the following sequence (1911: 10ff): through repeated and related life-experiences (Lebenserfahrungen) there arise 'Lebensstimmungen', that is very general attitudes towards life, such as 'live for today', aimed existence, other-worldly orientation and, most widely, optimism and pessimism. Lebensstimmungen, which are perhaps better translated as moods rather than as attitudes, have their cognitive corollary in a 'Weltbild', or image of the world. The Lebensstimmungen and the Weltbild constitute the lowest level for the construction of Weltanschauungen, which proceeds under the impetus of solving the 'riddle of life' (Lebensrätsel). It is indeed the attempt to offer a complete solution to the Lebensrätsel, insofar as every Weltanschauung does attempt this (and Dilthey offers no alternative version of Weltanschauung construction), that necessitates for each Weltanschauung the same sequence of construction:

> 'Alle Weltanschauungen enthalten, wenn sie eine vollständige Auflösung des Lebensrätsels zu geben unternehmen, regelmässig dieselbe Struktur. Diese Struktur ist jedesmal ein Zusammenhang, in welchem auf der Grundlage eines Weldbildes die Fragen nach Bedeutung und Sinn der Welt entschieden und heraus Ideal, höchstes Gut, oberste Grundsätze für die Lebensführung abgeleitet werden.'
> (1911: 11)[1]

Dilthey conceives the second level in the structure of Weltanschauung, building upon the Weltbild, as that of 'Lebenswürdigung', in which evaluation is predominant. On the base of the first and second stages of cognition and evaluation, the third stage 'Willenszielen', more directly related to motivation and thus embodying practical energy,

[1] 'All Weltanschauungen, if they attempt to provide a complete solution to the riddle of life, regularly possess the same structure. This structure is always a context in which, on the basis of an image of the world, the questions about the meaning and significance of the world are resolved, and from these solutions the ideal, the highest good, the supreme principles for the conduct of life are derived.'

is completed through the positing of ends, the development of end-rationality, and the encompassing of all previous elements within an over-riding value-order, which constitutes an overall normative life-plan. (1911: 13)

Despite the way in which Weltanschauungen are for Dilthey rooted in lived experience, it seems, both from the description of their highly logical mode and result of development and of their reason for development (to attain a complete solution of the Lebensrätsel), that Scheler was right in describing them as 'Bildungsweltanschauungen': artificial intellectual constructions. (Staude, 1967: 154) Not only are Dilthey's Weltanschauungen intellectualist, they appear to possess a high degree of logical integration, without even being characterised as ideal-types. Dilthey, then, does not help us to develop a more useful concept of Weltanschauung than that of Mannheim, and it seems that Berger and Luckmann have at least one major historical precedent for their conception of Weltanschauung.

For Jaspers, as for Dilthey, 'Weltanschauung' refers to a totality:

> 'Was ist Weltanschauung? Etwas Ganzes und etwas Universales.' (1922: 1)[1]

Jaspers emphasises the subjective and objective aspects of Weltanschuung: objective Weltbilder, when viewed from the point of view of the subject, are seen as 'Einstellungen', a term which refers to tendencies towards particular types of subject-object relationship in terms of the subject's mode of cognition (e.g., rational, aesthetic, contemplative). (1922: 42) But an Einstellung and a Weltbild constitute only abstract elements of a Weltanschauung, at whose centre we find the dynamic powers of the life of 'Geist' itself. (1922: 43) Thus, although the holistic nature of

[1] 'What is Weltanschauung? Something whole and something universal.'

Weltanschauungen is stressed,[1] we are given the impression that the coherence involved is far less intellectually constructed, and this is confirmed in Jaspers' account of the potential manifestations of Weltanschauungen, e.g. in style of life, art, religion and politics. (1922: 44)

In all these versions of Weltanschauung we have discovered a predominant holistic conception: can a study of the components suggested lead us to a more analytical exposition? Jaspers' 'Weltbild' and 'Einstellung' remain on a very general level, and seem to be primarily cognitive, Dilthey presents on an equally general level, through his three levels of Weltanschauung construction, apparently sharply divided spheres of cognition, evaluation and motivation. It may be that von Wiesner's list ("Ansichten und Meinungen, Behauptungen und Bekenntnisse", 1911: 173) is the most useful, in that no necessary division between the cognitive and the evaluative is posited and the terms used may apply to less generalised components of consciousness.

At this point it is relevant to remind ourselves of the components of superstructural consciousness that emerged in Chapter 3 through a study of sociologists of knowledge.

(ii) Non-holistic Conceptions of Superstructural Consciousness

In Chapter 3, we distinguished four general elements of the superstructure, each of wider significance than merely in relation to substructural action/situation: pragmatic knowledge, legitimations, promotions and extensions.[2] Is there any term, more specific than superstructure, world view or consciousness, that would include these elements

1 '... die allgemeinen, weltanschaulichen Gestalten ...' (1922: 44)

2 See above, Chapter 3, section (vi), pp 81-82

without relating them in a holistic manner? Berger and Luckmann's 'relatively autonomous sub-universes of meaning' (1967: 104) might at first seem useful in not attempting to subsume the consciousness of a whole society; but on closer inspection it resembles the holistic world view concept (though for a particular group within society), as coherence and consistency are still assumed. As for 'finite provinces of meaning'[1] (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 39), although they allow for non-integrated spheres of consciousness, the spheres, like Dilthey's levels of Weltanschauung structure, are over-compartmentalised, both from one another and from 'everyday reality'.

The sort of term we are looking for will be without the metaphysical assumptions of the Weltanschauung theorists or Berger and Luckmann. Among the concepts already encountered, that which fulfils the requirements most closely is 'perspective', which we met with in Chapters 2 and 3 in considering the work of Mannheim and Scheler. 'Perspective' is in fact Mannheim's basic concept of particular consciousness, and is developed in his sociology of knowledge in relation to the processes of material pragmatism, direct interest determination and commitment.[2] It may be argued that 'perspective' is an over-cognitive and insufficiently evaluative concept; though its use by Scheler,[3] for whom values constitute a sphere of knowledge, indicates that it may be used to include evaluations as well as cognitions. It is in any case pertinent to investigate the utility of various concepts that have similar meanings to 'perspective'.

1 The contrast between 'relatively autonomous universes of meaning' and 'finite provinces of meaning' is discussed in a footnote to Chapter 8, p 188 below.

2 See above, Chapter 2, p 32 and Chapter 3 p 78

3 See above, Chapter 3 p 82 ff.

(iii) Perspectives, Attitudes and the Like

McLeod and Chaffee have recently attempted to distinguish certain concepts which all refer to some level of conception of 'social reality'. They themselves introduce the distinction between social reality: the person's frame of reference in a social situation; and social reality: the degree to which this frame of reference is shared amongst the members of the social system. (1972: 52-54) They claim that Berger and Luckmann's usage of 'social reality' is in the first sense, whilst we should argue that Berger and Luckmann confuse the two senses, in such a way that social reality consists of the shared frames of reference of individuals in social situations. Amongst the concepts with similar meaning to 'social reality' are: 'cognitive map', which is reminiscent of 'Weltbild', and which they claim includes cognitions derived from non-social sources; 'frame of reference', a mental set applying to a variety of different situations; 'perspective', which, as a general cognition of social reality, would seem to be a social Weltbild, and share the holism of the Weltbild concept; and 'Weltanschauung', which, as a philosophy of the world or life, and perhaps positing fundamental values, would seem to be the only one of these concepts which is not strictly defined in cognitive terms. (1972: 56-58) Given their interest in cognition, it is not surprising that McLeod and Chaffee do not introduce for comparison the concept of 'attitude', which tends to have evaluative overtones. It could however be argued that both 'frame of reference' and 'perspective' could be defined similarly (especially if one allows for narrow perspectives as well as those covering social reality more generally) and, unlike 'cognitive map' and indeed 'Weltbild', could possess evaluational aspects.

Cooper and McGaugh undertake a similar study of attitude and related concepts. That most relevant to our interest is 'ideology',

which comes very close to the conceptions that we have encountered above:

> '... an individual's social ideology presents a holistic view of his self-perception and his perception of society. In a sense it is a generalized, global attitude, virtually a 'philosophy of life', though not formally structured'. (1966: 28)

In its stress on holism, this definition approaches the ideal-type definition of world view, and indicates that 'attitude' may well be a more particular version thereof: a 'part-world' view perhaps. It is significant that another of the concepts discussed by Cooper and McGaugh in relation to attitude is 'value': and, once again, in their discussion of 'value system', they approach the traditional concept of Weltanschauung (particularly that of Dilthey), and the notion of attitude as an element in its organisation:

> '... a value system is an individual's over-all life aspiration ... which on the one hand gives direction to his behaviour, and on the other hand is a frame of reference by which the worth of stimulus objects may be judged. ... it is an elaborate and articulate organisation of attitudes.' (1966: 31)

It would thus appear that 'attitude' is worthy of particular study as a concpet similar to 'perspective' in its less than total delineations of an individual's consciousness, and its inclusion of both cognitive and evaluative aspects. This view as to the similarity of attitude and perspective is supported by Asch, who writes:

> 'Language aptly refers to attitude as a perspective or a point-of-view, implying a certain unified way of looking at data.' (1966: 33)

As for the qualification 'unified', Asch claims:

> 'The study of attitudes must, it would seem, make the minimum assumption that a given view is relatively unified, consisting of interdependent parts in mutual relation.' (1966: 33)

Since attitudes or perspectives may apply over a far narrower area than 'Weltanschauung', we cannot quarrel with Asch's prerequisite of

'relatively unified', as, if an attitude/perspective were to consist of several quite unrelated views, then one would presumably decide that these constituted several distinct attitudes/perspectives.

Asch's definition of attitude clearly refers to an element of consciousness, without any necessary behavioural associations. This is not so for some psychologists, however, whose behaviourism permeates their definitions of attitude, thus leading to assumed, rather than examined, relationships of consciousness and behaviour. Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey, for example, define attitudes as:

> '... enduring systems of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings, and pro or con action tendencies with respect to social objects. ... In defining attitudes as systems, we are emphasizing the interrelatedness of the three attitude components. When incorporated in a system, these components become mutually interdependent. The cognitions of an individual about an object are influenced by his feelings and action tendencies toward that object. And a change in his cognitions about the object will tend to produce feelings and action tendencies towards it.' (1962: 139-140)

Allport similarly states that:

> 'Attitudes determine for each individual what he will see and hear, what he will think and what he will do. (1966: 17, my emphasis);

and Newcomb claims that:

> '... the ultimate referent of attitudes is behaviour;' (1966: 23)

In contrast, Thomas and Znaniecki define attitude in terms of a state of mind towards a social value (Allport, 1966: 19), thus providing a definition which concentrates on attitude as an element of consciousness, though the definition does reveal the tendency to regard attitude as a type of regular evaluation. The relation of attitude to motivation is brought out by Newcomb:

> '... attitudes are generally both more persistent and more inclusive than motives, and a 'motive' which is described as both persistent and general is indistinguishable from an attitude.' (1966: 24)

This quotation reveals the generality of attitudes, in terms of both time and abstraction.

The definition of attitude which we find most useful, however, is provided by Krech and Crutchfield:

> 'An attitude can be defined as an enduring organisation of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual's world.' (1948: 152, quoted by Newcomb, 1966: 23)

We should want to modify this definition only by making clear that it is relatively enduring, and by adding 'evaluational' to the list of processes. The definition does have distinct advantages over others, in that it recognises the cognitive dimension of attitudes, and indeed is easily related to the concepts of cognitions, evaluations and sentiments that we have used in previous chapters. The definition also brings out that attitudes are both more inclusive and more enduring (thus more 'general' in both senses) than particular cognitions/evaluations, whilst not falling into the trap of holism: there is no assumption (unlike McLeod and Chaffee's 'perspective') that an attitude covers the whole social world - indeed the definition emphasises that only an aspect of the individual's world is included.

At this point it is necessary to clarify why a general term such as attitude or perspective is of special value in our study. It is indeed for its very 'generality' (if this can be obtained without the metaphysical assumptions at the foundation of the traditional conception of Weltanschauung), since: a) we seek a term that will imply greater 'width' of coverage than merely substructural action/situation;

and b) we seek a term that will include the various aspects of consciousness that have previously been differentiated, since the distinctions between these aspects are not always relevant or possible to maintain. Cognitions, evaluations and sentiments may of course themselves be used more or less widely, though if a sentiment applied merely to one particular temporal situation, then one might wish to call it a feeling about that situation; and the more broadly that cognitions and evaluations apply over time and over different situations, the more likely one is to substitute 'frames of reference' or 'perspectives' for cognitions, and 'values' for evaluations. At this level of generality a sentiment may be seen as a non-consciously-formulated value, though the degree of conscious formulation is of course relative: the distinction thus may be difficult to operate. Cognitions and evaluations may also be difficult to differentiate (as already noted in relation to Parsons' action schema)[1]: a cognition is necessarily selective[2], and an evaluation necessarily subsumes cognitions; furthermore one is not always able to differentiate even the cognitive and evaluative aspects of a phenomenon (e.g. God). It is useful thus to have a term, applying at least at the level of extension over time, which will include cognitions, evaluations and sentiments, thus avoiding distinctions between the cognitive and the evaluative, and between that which is and is not consciously formulated. A generic concept such as 'attitude' or 'perspective' is therefore especially useful to us, as it implies extension over time and over different situations, allowing us to indicate thereby the content aspect of superstructural consciousness, without introducing distinctions irrelevant to our present purpose.

1 See above, Chapter 3, pp 86-87

2 That cognitive selection is inevitable is indicated by Weber's concept of 'value-relevance' - 1949: 21ff.

Should a choice be made, then, between the similar concepts of attitude and perspective? They do involve differences of emphasis: attitude, as we have seen, tends to stress the evaluative orientation, whilst perspective is clearly conceived by some in purely cognitive terms. Similarly attitude tends to concentrate on the subject's point of view, a 'stance' the actor adopts towards reality; whilst perspective takes a view more from the standpoint of the object, a selection from reality. Rather than search for a common concept, however, or select one and exclude the other, we shall use the concepts fairly interchangeably to refer to organisations of superstructural content. It must be emphasised, however, that attitude and perspective do refer to content rather than to the formal aspects of superstructural consciousness: they may include all the elements we differentiated as part of superstructural consciousness in Chapter 3, from the more evaluative legitimations to the more cognitive pragmatic knowledge; but all these are elements of content, which indeed is why it is useful to have a generic concept of content to contrast with the formal aspects of consciousness. Referring back to the Krech and Crutchfield definition of attitude, the 'enduring organisation' that is mentioned is an organisation of meaningful content, rather than an organisation of the formal properties of consciousness. It is to an examination of these formal properties that we now turn.

### (iv) Concepts of Consciousness Form

In 'perspective' we claim that we have found a generic concept of consciousness content without the holism assumed in 'world view/ perspective': thus an Anschauung without the Welt. But does 'perspective' refer only to content? In a section of Chapter 3, on Scheler's differentiations of the superstructure,[1] 'perspective' is

[1] See above, Chapter 3, section vii.

seen in terms of both objects of knowledge and forms of cognition. These 'forms', however, refer rather to the way in which 'knowledge' is attained and socially organised than to the way in which the individual holds his knowledge. Scheler's 'forms of cognition' thus refer more to aspects of knowledge than to aspects of the individual. The formal properties that we wish to contrast with perspective are the characteristics of cognitive structure that have recently aroused so much interest amongst psychologists. When however we look at studies of cognitive structure, we find some inconsistency or ambiguity in the characterisations thereof. Bieri et al, for instance, associate cognitive structures closely with cognitive maps. They quote Mandler's (1962) account of cognitive structures as:

> '... rules of behaviour, maps or schemata laid down which connect various behaviours and environmental inputs.' (Bieri et al, 1970: 160);

and themselves state that:

> 'First, cognitive structures refer to organised systems whose properties are dependent upon the interrelations of the various elements in a given system. Second, knowledge of cognitive structures implies that predictions can be made of the way in which the person copes with his environment.' (1970: 160)

These definitions seem to lack a clear differentiation of aspects of form and content: they could for instance be easily understood to refer to organisations of meaningful content, and thus perspectives, except perhaps for the emphasis on 'system properties'.

Schroder, Driver and Streufert make a much clearer distinction between form and content:

> 'The emphasis will be upon how a person thinks or uses an attitude as a structure for processing new information, as opposed to an emphasis upon content, upon what a person thinks, what his attitudes are, and so forth.' (1970: 175)

This statement of course also supports our use of 'attitude' as the organising concept of content. Further statements by Schroder, Driver and Streufert, however, introduce some ambiguity into the definitions. 'Content variables' are said to be the set of filters, such as attitudes and needs, which select certain kinds of information from the environment; whilst 'structural variables' act:

> '... like a program or set of rules which combines these items of information in specific ways.' (1970: 175)

The authors do not realise that such a 'set of rules' could refer to attitudes combining information in terms of meaningful content, and that, in order to emphasise the formal approach, definitions of cognitive structure would have to stress either the formal properties of the combination or a combination of formal properties. Both Bieri et al and Schroder, Driver and Streufert, despite dealing predominantly with structural concepts, thus do not provide a clear distinction between the formal and content aspects of cognition.

Scott, who otherwise provides a most interesting account of various structural properties of cognition, similarly defines cognitive structure in such a way that it could be synonymous with attitude or perspective:

> 'By cognitive structures I mean those whose elements consist of ideas consciously entertained by the person in his phenomenal view of the world. ... The content of experience is organised into structural assemblies from which any element of content derives its significance.' (1970: 145-6)

He also uses 'cognitive style' and 'cognitive structure' fairly interchangeably without providing a distinction of definition; though if one makes a careful study of where he uses these concepts, 'style' tends to be used in conjunction with such cognitive phenomena as precise thinking or dogmatism, and 'structure' in relation to the differentiation, relatedness and integration of cognitive elements.

Warr, Schroder and Blackman present as an example of the distinction between cognitive structure and content, the contrast between authoritarianism and dogmatism:

> 'Authoritarianism is fairly clearly a 'content variable' in that a person's degree of authoritarianism is assessed in terms of what he believes; a high F-scale scorer is someone who holds beliefs, attitudes, values, etc. which have a specified content. Dogmatism on the other hand is much more a 'structural variable'. This means that it is concerned with the organisation of belief-disbelief systems of many kinds, rather than with the content of only a few systems. Dogmatic thinking is necessarily manifested in terms of some content, and in empirical practice we are of course not able to completely separate a system's content from its structure'. (1970: 334-5)

Warr makes a similar point:

> 'Authoritarianism is measured in terms of what a person thinks and wants, whereas dogmatism is more a question of how he thinks and wants.' (1970: 10)

Warr sees enquiries into the way a person thinks or wants, such as dogmatism, as concerned with variables of style. He defines 'cognitive styles'[1] as:

> '... habitual ways or modes of dealing with information about oneself and one's environment which are to a large degree independent of the content of the information being handled.' (1970: 11)

Warr also attempts to differentiate cognitive style and structure, but the distinction remains somewhat nebulous:

> 'A statement about cognitive structure is a statement about some kind of enduring entity, whereas a statement about cognitive style is more a statement about regularly observed consistencies in thinking.' (1970: 11-12)

[1] Schutz also refers to 'cognitive style' but describes them in terms of certain fixed and very general types, including abstract orientational elements, e.g. towards time and self. Schutz's 'cognitive styles' refer as much to general meaningful content as to formal properties of consciousness. (1973: 230)

The only difference between style and structure here seems to be that 'structure' is more persistent and covers a wider area of the individual's cognition. Certainly both style and structure, as Warr points out, are statements of 'how' rather than of 'what'. Warr therefore concludes that:

> ''Cognitive style' and 'cognitive structure' are thus overlapping terms; the difference lies in the fact that 'cognitive style' refers to certain aspects of thought processes and 'cognitive structure' refers to the system which mediates these processes.'
> (1970: 12)

'Width', persistence and the notion of structure/system per se are not able to differentiate cognitive style, cognitive structure and attitude. If we look at the way in which both Scott and Warr actually use these terms, however, we may conclude that all, as Scott suggests, have cognitive phenomena as their elements, but that attitude refers to a coherence in terms of the meaningful content of these elements, cognitive style refers to a coherence in terms of their formal properties, and cognitive structure refers to formal characteristics of relationships between their meaningful contents. Thus, as we have seen, authoritarianism may be seen as an attitude and dogmatism as a cognitive style; or, to use a different example, cynicism may be seen as an attitude and scepticism as a cognitive style: one may or may not be sceptical about cynical attributions of motive to those who seek political power: cynicism here refers to the content of certain ideas, scepticism to the manner in which these ideas are considered. Cognitive structure may be described in terms of such properties as compartmentalisation and consistency, and is thus clearly not interchangeable with cognitive style, even though both, and indeed attitude also, may be involved in describing aspects of one particular cognitive characteristic. There may in fact be a probable or necessary mutual exclusion or associ-

ation of certain attitudes, cognitive styles and cognitive structures. Precise thinking, for instance, although at first sight a cognitive style, must also imply certain characteristics of cognitive structure, such as a clear differentiation of ideas from one another. Similarly a relationship may be posited between a cognitive structure which has the characteristics of a 'closed system' (Rokeach, 1954, quoted by Warr, Schroder and Blackman, 1970: 335), and a dogmatic cognitive style: with the latter, a closed system is more likely to develop (as it is easier to remain dogmatic if one's various cognitions give support to each other in the refutation of alternative perspectives); whilst to retain the system in a closed state it may be necessary to resort to dogmatic assertions from time to time. The very notion of a 'dogma', indeed, includes both these aspects.

At this point it is worth noting that attitude, cognitive style and cognitive structure may influence one another in a less direct fashion. One may for instance have an emotional response to a type of cognitive structure, resulting in the formation of particular cognitive styles and attitudes: an example of this would be the development of a dogmatic authoritarianism from the insecurity that may arise from a consciously inconsistent cognitive structure.

### (v) Conclusion: The Generality of Cognitive Concepts

To conclude this chapter, we shall look at the degree of generality of the concepts of consciousness that we have discussed. Warr warns against assuming that particular cognitive characteristics obtain throughout an individual's consciousness: such characteristics may be 'trans-situational', but:

> 'It is becoming apparent that cognitive styles extend over only a limited range of situations, so that a measure of style or structure (and indeed of more content loaded personality dimensions) is of restricted predictive value.' (1970: 14)

Scott is even more explicit:

> '... there is little empirical assurance at present of any generality of these structural properties across cognitive domains. Psychologists are used to assuming a functional unity within a person and within his cognitive processes.'
> (1970: 155, my emphasis)

Scott has doubts about using the individual as the unit of analysis, and thus about distinguishing 'classes of people' by their types of cognitive structure:

> 'At present, the appropriate unit of analysis in the study of cognitive styles would seem to be not the total person, but a particular area of his functioning that is associated with an identifiable event-domain.'
> (1970: 157)

We must thus conclude, on the generality of cognitive style and structure, that, similarly to attitude, these concepts apply at a level of generality that implies extension over time and over different situations, without involving holistic assumptions. They may therefore be considered to delineate the formal aspects of superstructural consciousness, just as attitude refers to the meaningful content.

Within the limits of specificity and generality that we have suggested, attitudes, cognitive styles and cognitive structure may cover variable 'widths' of the individual's consciousness, as long as there is present the necessary coherence of form or content to make the concept applicable. In the same way as attitude implies a greater generality than cognition or evaluation, a more particular version of a cognitive style (i.e. applying to specific situations or even unique occasions) may be called a 'cognitive form': Warr would term this a 'response style', and although this terminology would suggest a behaviourist orientation, the force of the distinction (in terms of generality) holds:

> '... the trans-situational assumption is an important one for us to be able to distinguish a cognitive style from a response style. The latter is usually viewed as a characteristic way of responding to a particular kind of situation, for example a specific test-taking situation, and is in a sense a very particularized cognitive style.'
> (1970: 11)

'Cognitive structure' has a greater variability of application: its level of generality is more a matter of the researcher's choice, especially with attributes such as consistency: one may investigate the degree of consistency in relatively particular areas of the individual's cognitive world, up to (if indeed this would be of any use) that obtaining through his world view as a whole. Although 'cognitive structure' sounds as if its normal use might be at the level of world view, we have seen that both Scott and Warr have emphasised its greater utility at the level of particular cognitive fields: it is thus a concept whose level of generality is more likely to be equivalent to that of attitude or cognitive style than of world view.

How, then, are we to consider world view in relation to attitude/perspective, cognitive style and cognitive structure? If an actual description of a particular world view is offered, it would of course have to be in ideal-typical form, due to its necessary selectivity: this selectivity means that the suggested 'world view' is not necessarily the most general view (or the only possible formulation of the view) that the individual entertains of the world. Nor does one need to assume that the world view (actual or ideal-typical[1]) possesses consistency. The function of 'world view' as an ideal-type to describe the features of a broad perspective on the world, however, would seem to be better performed by 'attitude' or 'perspective', which, as has

[1] It was suggested in Chapter 3 (p 71 above), in relation to Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, that even an ideal-typical conception of Weltanschauung need not possess consistency.

been mentioned above, may operate also on this relatively broad scale if deemed to be useful.

The concept of 'world view' does however have special value as a total 'rag-bag'[1] concept of the individual's consciousness, without the assumptions of consistency and coherence that we noted in the traditional conception of Weltanschauung. As a general, all-inclusive concept, its principal utility will be in its capacity to refer to the whole of the individual's consciousness through a period of time, so that any interrelations between the attitudes, cognitive styles and cognitive structures of the individual are more likely to be revealed. A world view may thus be seen in terms of its meaningful, stylistic and structural properties, the first two being usefully described in terms of ideal-type concepts of attitudes/perspectives and cognitive styles, with structural properties being covered by cognitive structure concepts. Since a structural property of the world view as a whole is likely to be inconsistency, naturally we cannot assume either meaningful or stylistic consistency through the world view.

Having examined, in this chapter and the last, the notions of sub-structure and superstructure in terms of an analysis of the concepts of 'class' and 'world view', we are now in a position to present a general model of the way in which aspects of an individual's world view may develop from his class situation and action.

[1] Such a conception was suggested at the beginning of this chapter to be one possible interpretation of von Wiesner's concept of Weltanschauung, the emphasis being placed upon the 'Summe' rather than the 'Inbegriff'.

## CHAPTER 7: A GENERAL MODEL OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORLD VIEW IN RELATION TO CLASS

### (i) Introduction

In the last two chapters the concepts of 'class' and 'world view' have been examined separately, in the light of the conclusions on 'substructure' and 'superstructure' reached in Chapters 2 and 3. This chapter will aim to bring together the concepts of 'class' and 'world view' in a general model which, whilst deriving from the conclusions on the substructure-superstructure relationship reached in Part I, will specify this relationship in accordance with our selected area of investigation.

### (ii) Relevant Aspects of 'Class'

In Chapter 5 we noted how economic conditions can influence an individual's thought only in working through his meanings and motives.[1] This statement can be seen in the context of a more general sociological approach to economic conditions, which become significant for sociology only through their relations to values and especially to meaningful social action. If we look firstly at the 'structure of economic situations', for instance, it is clear that if it were a mere description of hierarchy it would be sociologically irrelevant: even to call this hierarchy a structure implies a stronger connection between its various levels than just a hierarchical ordering. These connections become apparent only when one is aware of the interdependence of the actions bringing about the hierarchy, though the latter may be described according to both its static and dynamic features without any necessary reference to this system of actions. The structure of economic situations, even

[1] See above, Chapter 5, p 119

if analysed as a product of economic actions, would however be of no significance in itself for the sociologist unless relevant to values. But even if the investigator has no interest in the structure of economic situations as such, this structure or any particular position within it may become relevant for him as an aim of previous economic action, as a present state relevant to the values of some social actor(s), or as a condition of future social action.

In Chapter 5 we thus emphasised the necessity of including both objective and subjective aspects in an analysis of class: we stressed the importance of examining the actual consciousness of the individual in the position, as well as the basic consciousness associated with the position in the structure. In terms of a rational model of economic action, the consciousness of the actor was seen as involving his values and ends in relation to his actual and possible economic situation, economic action and work situation (the principal elements of our wider conception of class). It was noted that the values and ends might themselves develop in relation to the objective components of the actor's economic action, and it is the purpose of this chapter to explore other possible developments of consciousness therefrom, as well as from economic and work situation. We are however interested only in that consciousness which develops in a direct relationship with economic situation, economic action and work situation: we are not, e.g., concerned with the consciousness that derives from one's experience in roles that are determined by economic situation, except insofar as such consciousness relates to one's evaluation of what economic situation attains. Thus justifications of a status-ridden society may be relevant, where these relate to one's enjoyment of the positions of status that derive from one's economic situation; but our field of concern would not include, e.g., the influence of one's experience as president of a charity in making one more sympathetic towards that charity.

The fact that we are concerned with the construction of a rational model of the development of an actor's world view in relation to his class must not lead us to neglect the system of economic situations and actions within which the actor operates. In Chapter 5 we mentioned that seeing the actor's economic situation and action in a structural context may reveal the potential group formations that would include him.[1] It may further be noted that the actor's orientation may be not only towards his position within the system of economic situations and actions but also towards the system itself; since the system as a whole may be seen as providing a wider set of conditions within which he operates, his economic action may be directed not only at maintaining or changing his position in the system, but at maintaining/changing the system itself.[2] Thus there is a deliberate vagueness at the core of the idea of 'commitment':[3] commitment to a present or future 'system of actions' (whether individual or societal) that will achieve one's ends. Similarly with respect to what economic situation socially attains: one's orientation may be towards the wider system in terms of which different positions in a hierarchy of economic situations achieve differential non-economic rewards, so that e.g. one may be committed to a certain system of relationships between class and status (as in the above example of legitimation of a status-ridden society). Clearly orientation towards broader system factors is particularly likely to involve the actor in the cooperative formation of attitudes and actions, thus indicating that a methodological individualist model necessarily excludes neither system analysis nor the examination of the action and consciousness of groups.

1 See above, Chapter 5, p 119

2 A principal focus of the Marxian interest in economic action is upon such system orientations.

3 See above, Chapter 2, p 33

(iii) Methodological Individualism

At this point it is helpful to expound our reasons for the adoption of methodological individualism in the construction of the general model. We have already explored in Chapter 2 some of the ideas of Mannheim and Goldmann on the relationship between individual and group consciousness. Clearly Goldmann is right when he points out that the individual could not possibly create his own mental structures, his experience being too brief and too limited (1967: 495); and Mannheim is correct in pointing out the mistake of believing:

> '... that all the ideas and sentiments which motivate an individual have their origin in him alone, and can be adequately explained solely on the basis of his own life-experience.' (1936: 2)

Yet both writers tend towards an equation of individual and group consciousness: this is particularly true for Goldmann, as we have seen for instance in his failure to deal with the 'maximum potential consciousness' of an individual in a social position, and his consequent false assumptions about the self-explanatory nature of tendencies towards maximum potential consciousness in a group.[1]

In order to avoid hypothesising the ontological primacy of one social grouping rather than another (whether in the general field of the sociology of knowledge, as with the subsumption of an individual's ideas in the consciousness of a particular group; or in the assumptions of group realism embedded in certain conceptions of social class), a methodological individualist standpoint is necessary. Such a standpoint is in line with the Weberian analysis of class and class position examined in Chapter 5. Certain Marxist theorists have however tended to concentrate on 'class' as indicating a group (though it may not be conscious of itself as such) with economic interests in common (for they share the same income / income-

[1] See above, Chapter 2, p. 48

prospects / sources of income), and thus of potentially great importance as a combined force in a situation of conflict with another such group with opposing interests. The stress on the importance of 'interests' does of course receive support from our concentration on action oriented to economic ends, but we should leave open further possibilities for the actor than to adopt, if he has 'true consciousness', the economic ends posited for him by certain class theorists, and than to choose the particular means offered to him by those theorists as the most appropriate to achieve his ends. As noted above[1], a worker with a goal of great economic advancement for himself may choose, amongst other means, to attempt to climb the 'legitimate' ladder out of his class, or may combine with other workers to attempt to change the basic conditions (such as the criteria for distribution of incomes) affecting their common means of economic advance. We should wish to give neither of these alternatives a priori analytical importance over the other, even though one might prefer the worker to act in combination with others, possibly on the basis of a more collective conception of his ends: our preferences are however not the point. Furthermore there are many possible groupings the actor could join or help create to promote his/their economic advancement, and a fixed notion of class in group terms (unlike our conception as outlined in Chapter 5) could only arbitrarily delimit those who would fall within its bounds, as the similarity of incomes / prospects of income / sources of income is a relative concept, and the actor may combine with more specific or more inclusive groups as he believes appropriate for the achievement of his economic ends.

It is of course true, however, that an analysis of an actor in a situation will be inadequate for an understanding of consciousness-formation unless his relations with other actors are taken into account. Thus, whilst methodological individualism directs our attention to the

[1] See above, Chapter 2, p 36

actor in the situation, we are nevertheless led to analyse the groups with which he is likely to come into contact, and the mutual construction of consciousness (on the basis of previous 'inherited' perspectives on the world) of the actors in these groups. Our rejection of a Marxist view of class as a group having some kind of analytical priority over other possible economic-interest groupings (which might themselves be termed 'classes' by other writers) therefore does not preclude our examining the actor's participation in groups (whose vital significance in a study of the construction of social perspectives cannot be denied), but rather derives from our emphasis on the multiple possibilities of action open to the actor, which are narrowed, not always in ways we should prefer, by the conditions of his situation and his partly derivative, partly pre-given, consciousness thereof.

To start from a conception of an actor does not, therefore, entail a notion of an isolated individual subsequently injected into a group, but rather on the one hand avoids an a priori delineation of groups possessing superior ontological status, and on the other hand similarly avoids, through the use of the term 'actor', any notions of human beings as 'individuals', with more or less consistent 'personalities' - notions adequate if at all to specific social systems, yet treated as supra-historical. In this context we may legitimately deny that a methodological individualist standpoint necessarily assumes individualistic economic motivation;[1] our aim is rather that of analysing the social conditioning of the potential means for economic advancement of an individual without specifying whether the actor conceives such economic advancement in an individualist or collectivist manner. The way he conceives his economic advancement, i.e. whether his economic ends include

[1] See above, Chapter 5, p 111

others improving their economic situation, is a further condition influencing his choice of means and may itself be explored for its origins. Certainly we reject the assumption that the actor would only cooperate with others for economic advancement if this were to his own greatest advantage for gaining his individualistic economic ends.

It is vital to emphasise the point that methodological individualism in terms of 'actor' terminology[1] is an antithetical to theoretical or practical individualism as it is to group realism.[2] The criticisms we have made of Berger and Luckmann[3] concerning assumptions of both social and individual consistency are indicative of our point of view on this matter: such consistency assumptions are to be avoided. Similarly in Chapter 6 we noted how the concepts of consciousness (such as attitudes and cognitive styles) that we wished to use were of a certain level of generality that, while implying extension over time and over different situations, did not assume overall consistency.[4] Along with Scott (1970: 157) we doubt the wisdom of using the individual as the unit of analysis - a position which is avoided by a methodological individualism whose theoretical constructions build with 'actor' rather than 'individual' units.

1 cf Weber's discussion of particular and hypothetical actors (Weber, 1947: 89).

2 Popper, in similar vein, rejects '... the false belief that ... 'methodological psychologism' is a necessary corollary of a methodological individualism - of the quite unassailable doctrine that we must try to understand all collective phenomena as due to the actions, interactions, aims, hopes, and thoughts of individual men,...But we can be individualists without accepting psychologism'. (Popper, 1961: 157) Compare also Weber's statement (which of course predates Popper's): '... for the subjective interpretation of action in sociological work ... collectivities must be treated as solely the resultants and modes of organisation of the particular acts of individual persons, since these alone can be treated as agents in a course of subjectively understandable action.' (Weber, 1947: 101)

3 See above, Chapter 2, p 58 ff

4 See above, Chapter 6, pp 141-142

The 'actor' extends over only a limited period of time and number of situations: it is, like the chosen cognitive concepts in Chapter 6, an ideal-typical concept whose level of generality will be governed by considerations of utility in explanation, rather than being a priori specified.

Several writers apart from Weber have indicated in their work a standpoint that would concur with the methodological individualism proposed here. Mannheim, in his later 'Essays on the Sociology of Culture', claims that we need to make:

> '... certain revisions in the popular image of man. Personality traits are not attributes of the individual as such, but rather aspects of his behaviour in particular relationships. What may appear to be a pervasive personality trait could easily prove a dependent variable of specific associations. ... In short, personal attributes ... are working abstractions which in the last analysis have meaning only within well-defined areas of behaviour . ... it is misleading to speak of the social determination of the individual - as though the person and his society confronted one another as discrete entitites.'
>
> (Mannheim, 1956: 46)

Within the more specific field of individual and group consciousness, G Mead states that a significant symbol presupposes a social context of significance, a universe of discourse (1934: 89): this need not lead us to assumptions of individual or social consistency associated with Mead's concept of the 'generalized other', nor to adopt the terminology of a 'universe of discourse' if that would imply the individual's involvement in one basic universe, such as the common-sense everyday world of Berger and Luckmann, or the integrating values of Parsons' cultural system. The 'social context of significance' may instead be taken to place an emphasis on the situation (including the other actors) in which a meaningful action takes place, and hence to imply that meanings should not be considered as somehow physically located within

the individual, but rather considered as pertaining to the actor in a limited social context.

Methodological individualism is thus seen to be able to avoid the traps of both group and individual realism. It is furthermore capable of analysing both social systems and social groups. We may thus proceed to the analysis of social relationships in the general model from a methodological individualist standpoint.

### (iv) Individual and Group in the Development of World View from Class

In Chapter 6 we concluded that 'world view' is best conceived as a 'rag-bag' concept of individual consciousness. It is now apparent that, since 'world view' applies to consciousness beyond that of the context-bound actor, it may be seen equally in terms of individual or group consciousness. In neither case would assumptions of consistency or coherence operate, and its utility in the analysis of 'group consciousness' would be similar to that described for individual consciousness at the end of Chapter 6. An example of our approach to group consciousness may be given through an analysis of a passage by Becker and Geer on 'group culture':

> 'Classically, culture is conceived as arising in response to some problem faced by a group. The problem is one that individual members of the group see as common to all members; it is a shared problem. In some way, a way of meeting the problem is arrived at, a mode of action that is agreed to be the best or most proper solution. The solution leads to, or implies, more general views and assumptions - the perspectives and values underlying the culture, its 'world view'. The organised whole of such problem solutions is the culture of the group.'
>
> (Becker and Geer, 1971: 56)

Here we find the predominant pragmatic conception of consciousness; the significant point however is that the problem is not one pertaining to a sociologist's reified group or system, but one that is recognised as such by the group's members, who together work out a solution. So far, then,

Becker and Geer do not run counter to the principles of methodological individualism; nor indeed does their observation that such solutions may be extended to more general perspectives. Where we should differ from them, however, is in their conception that such problem solutions constitute an 'organised whole' which is the culture of the group: such a conception incorporates unnecessary assumptions of consistency and coherence, and, unlike an approach in terms of actor/interactors, takes the group out of its social context and needlessly grants to it a trans-situational reality. Groups, like individuals, must be seen within their social contexts, and not be assumed to possess an intrinsic non-relative existence: as noted above, methodological individualism is able to avoid both group and individual realism.

A methodological individualist standpoint may thus be applied to the necessary consideration of social relationships in the formation of perspectives. We must take account of the influence of those with whom the actor comes into contact: in many cases their influence upon the development of the actor's consciousness will be more profound that his own 'direct' experience, though perhaps the most usual pattern is a situation of mutual influence such as that suggested in the Becker and Geer quotation. Even where one ascertains the strong influence of a group of which the actor is not a member, this group may of course itself be analysed in terms of relationships between actors.

Within the sphere of 'class', one may distinguish between directly and indirectly contacted groups. 'Contact' here is used in a broad and weak sense of relating, not necessarily in 'face-to-face' terms. The direct-indirect distinction refers to whether the contact is directly through elements of the actor's class experience, evaluation and action; or, less directly related to the actor's class, through the ideological

power of others.[1] Although ideological power is not a central concern in our analysis, it is worth noting that it may enhance the influence of those directly contacted, and it is necessary (in order to influence) if contact would not otherwise be a direct result or intrinsic part of the individual's situation or action. Ideological power may or may not be related to class factors; it does however require some control over, or at least access to, the means of communication and some likelihood (e.g. legitimate authority) that the actor will be persuaded by one's views. This facility for ideological power may, then, be partially determined by the objective features of an actor's class; and indeed his very economic situation may be based upon the utilisation of ideological power, without which means he could not avoid threats to the maintenance of his position. The facility, of course, is not sufficient (for conscious influence) without the volition, and this will be linked to the subjective aspects of the actor's class, in the mode of either 'commitment' or 'direct interestedness'.[2]

The desire and capacity of alters to use ideological power will thus be the major factor forging those relationships of ego that are not directly involved in his actions/situations, the extent of the power conditioning (though to some extent defined in terms of ) the degree of influence. Our interest however lies in those groups 'directly contacted' through the actor's class, i.e. on the basis of his economic situation (and what it attains), economic action (and conditions thereof) and work situation. Such groups may for instance include those with whom the individual relates for or in the achievement of the values which his present or future economic situation attains or is aimed at attaining,

1 Though of course alter's ideological power may be related to the lack of such power involved in ego's class position. The 'direct-indirect' distinction is based on that made at the conclusion of Chapter 2, p 65 above.

2 See above, Chapter 2, pp 33-34

even if the economic action conditions of the various actors concerned vary greatly. This contact may be simply a case of mutual cognitive influence; or may mean the actor taking account of others through their relation to himself in terms of economic situation, so that, e.g., he follows the norms of his status group, or keeps his manners distinct from those of a lower status. The 'contact' may alternatively be more a question of identification with a group based on economic situation, thus, like 'taking account', not necessarily involving personal relationships. Face-to-face relationships may derive not only from the actor's economic situation, but may of course be involved in the actions which are the means for achieving his economic ends: here are included those whom the actor encounters in his work situation, and more specifically those whose relationships to the actor constitutes a significant aspect of the means, or of the delimiting conditions thereof, to his economic ends. Even where not directly encountered, such others may be taken account of in one's economic action; and of course the actor may identify with others to the extent of including their own economic ends within his own.[1]

The relationships that the actor forms in his work situation may be of considerable significance. The work situation may act as a further determinant of the actor's contacts, i.e. of the selection of those whom he in fact does contact, from amongst those who constitute (in the way indicated above) elements of his economic action: e.g., his work situation may isolate him from those who together might cooperate to raise the market value of their skills. The work situation will also affect the degree of visibility of the social relations which act as conditions delimiting the actor's means to economic ends: any particular work situation may, for instance, tend to reveal or obscure the power relations that may constitute the basis of the system within which the actor's economic

[1] This was mentioned in Chapter 5, p 111 above.

action operates. The work situation may moreover influence the actor's economic ends: he may come to include in his own ends the economic ends of those with whom he works. And even if his social relations at work are formed only through the work situation itself, and are not a 'constitutive' element of his economic action, they may nonetheless be of considerable significance in imparting both economic and other attitudes of those concerned.

In sum, social groups may influence the actor through their 'direct' involvement in the various aspects of his class: his economic situation, economic action and work situation. The mode of influence concerned may be: a) face-to-face interaction, which one must not see merely in terms of one-way influence (from others to self), as the case is frequently that of groups of actors in a similar position working out together common cognitions and evaluations; b) the actor taking account of others in his judgements and actions: this may include taking negative account of them, e.g. as competing rivals, or conflicting groups; c) identification of the actor with others, e.g. so that their economic ends/means are seen as his own ends/means. In none of this are we implying that the actor is uninfluenced in his class-related consciousness by groups outside of the class context; but since our interest is in the influence of class upon the development of world view, our emphasis will clearly be upon what may be broadly termed 'class contacts'. These in turn may of course be related to the system in which they may have their origin as the 'potential group formations' mentioned in Chapter 5.[1]

We have seen previously how consciousness may be 'extended' from a particular situation/action because of the latter's salience or temporal priority.[2] It is clear that the prior or frequent making of class contacts

[1] See above, Chapter 5, p 119

[2] See above, Chapter 4, p 92

may lead to the extension of the consciousness involved therein to other spheres: the understanding of new situations thus occurs through the application of categories previously appropriated elsewhere - in this case through the actor's class contacts, in a process similar to that described by Scheler in his discussion of the application of social categories to wider spheres of knowledge.[1] This process can be traced in the negative sense of lack of alternative social contacts: McLeod and Chaffee suggest that the 'learning' of one version of social reality may simply be the inevitable result of the absence of competing versions within the social system (McLeod and Chaffee, 1972: 56); but one can see that, even where such competing versions are available, the individual may not come into contact with them. The extension of consciousness from one sphere may thus be due to the lack of competing sources of 'information' - a situation which in our case would mean a narrow set of class contacts and few contacts outside the sphere of class (perhaps through class factors being the most important determinants of social relationships in the society concerned).

Some of the elements of class, for instance the structure of economic situations and what they attain, are of particular significance in the study of social groups and their ideas, and the analysis may of course proceed along the methodological individualist lines suggested above. An examination of such factors is less relevant in tracing the development of the consciousness of a particular individual, except: a) in so far as we analyse the sources of the thought of an individual in a stable economic situation as an economic-situation-conditioned group product, an analysis which would not be of primary interest in a study of the development of his consciousness, and which indeed would tend to refer back to a group and its consciousness existing prior to the individual,

[1] See above, Chapter 4, p 93

the latter adopting the former's consciousness through a process of socialisation; b) in so far as his consciousness develops in relation to developments in his economic situation, though even here the most significant developments may occur through already socially current ideas being adopted in the process of socialisation into a new group based on a new economic situation. The question of whether or not the study of social groups and their ideas is relevant to the analysis of the development of the consciousness of a particular individual must not of course be confused with the question of the applicability of methodological individualism; we should contend that methodological individualism in the form of an ideal-typical actor model is equally applicable to the study of social groups and of particular individuals. Indeed the very fact of the importance of social relationships in our model, an importance that we have attempted to demonstrate in this section, increases the utility of the ideal-typical actor model of economic situation and action: communication within a group based on shared class factors will tend to overcome a particular individual's indifference or ignorance, and lead to his adopting cognitions and evaluations more directly related to his own economic situation and action (or at least to the aspects of his economic situation and action conditions that he shares with the group) and to the potential economic action that he shares with them. Thus, for instance, although an individual may be unaware of the macro-system conditions of his economic action, and uninvolved in conflict aimed at large-scale socio-economic change, some contingent aspects of the consciousness that develops in those in a similar position who are so aware/involved may nonetheless become his consciousness through group communication, yet still without his necessarily becoming consciously and directly involved in class conflict. It is presumably such situations that give credibility to Goldmann's less analytical notion of the 'maximum potential consciousness' of a group.[1]

[1] See above, Chapter 2, p 41 ff

In the terminology of Chapter 5, then, the idiosyncrasies of the actual consciousness of the individual in the position will tend with group communication (where the group is based on shared class factors) to be weakened in favour of consciousness more exclusively based on position in the structure. Again, in terms of Goldmann's concepts of consciousness,[1] such communication is likely to lead to the individual's actual consciousness (i.e. in addition to his basic consciousness) being more adequate (in the sense of more directly related to his economic position) since communication based on class factors will give such factors greater priority in the individual's consciousness. From this it would seem that the principal utility of the concepts of 'basic' and 'adequate' consciousness related to the 'position in the structure' is as ideal-types in a model for comparison with the development of an individual's 'actual' consciousness. At this point it is worth examining the general methodological basis for the construction of an ideal-typical actor model.

## (v) Ideal-typical Actor Models

In Chapter 1 (section iii) we arrived, through a comparison of Weber and Pareto, at a basic conceptual framework for the analysis of action. This framework has found expression at various points in the argument to this stage: it has been used either implicitly or explicitly in earlier chapters, such as in the conception of the substructure in the sociology of knowledge presented in the conclusion of Chapter 2; in Chapter 5, in the emphasis on ends and values as components of the individual's economic action; and in Chapter 6, where sentiment is seen as a non-consciously formulated value. The comparison of Weber and Pareto, then, can lead to the development of a suitable framework for the ideal-typical analysis of

[1] See above, Chapter 2, section iv

action. We have already provided an argument for a methodological individualist approach in terms of 'actors'; here we shall concentrate on developing the case[1] for ideal-typical analysis in terms of rational constructs.

One of the functions of ideal-typical analysis in sociology is to provide clarity, and thus communicability, of description:

> '... as regards exposition, to the extent that it wishes to be unambiguous, the use of precise formulations in the sphere of cultural analysis is in many cases absolutely necessary. ... social science in our sense is concerned with practical significance. This significance can however very often be brought unambiguously to mind only by relating the empirical data to an ideal limiting case'. (Weber, 1949: 94.)

This does not imply that sociology can deal only with rational action, but that non-logical action must be translated in terms of a 'sociological rationality' (Sahay, 1972: 46ff, 106ff & 174-5), through which non-rational elements such as non-consciously formulated sentiments and motivations are seen as values and ends, thus enabling not only clarity of description but also the use of the ideal-type in comparative analysis and thus in explanation.

In terms of Pareto's threefold analysis of beliefs,[2] where subjective analysis becomes necessary (because objective analysis reveals non-logicality) the utility of the belief for the actor may be revealed, e.g. through its legitimation of a non-logical action. The analysis may thus reveal the unacknowledged underlying sentiment, which is rendered ideal-typically conscious and related in logical manner to the action. Thus sentiment as well as value and end may become logically related to action in the rational ideal-type. This latter is then compared with the empirical situation, thus revealing, if motive or action is found to differ

[1] This case was first presented in Chapter 1, p 9 above.

[2] See above, Chapter 2, p 29

from that hypothesised in the ideal-type, other values/ends/sentiments at work, or else a non-logical 'association-tendency' of motive and action. This indicates the place of association-tendencies in our rational ideal-typical model: although they are of considerable importance in the comparison of the ideal-typical with the actual situation, and although consciousness may develop from them (e.g. in the form of legitimations of them), they are not involved in our model of class as a substructure in the sociology of knowledge. This model aims at portraying the strongest influence that class factors may have upon the development of consciousness, and, where action is concerned, rationality of connection between motive and action will demonstrate the strongest influence.[1] Habitual action for instance would not be of primary interest to us, as it would not reveal the development of the individual's consciousness, though there remains the possibility of tracing such actions to the sentiments etc. of a pre-existent group, in which case their action may be understood once more in terms of sociological rationality.

This emphasis on ideal-typical rationality, however, applies only to the action elements of class. We have already noted in Chapter 5 the possibility of consciousness arising through the experience of elements of class, in particular of the work situation, as a possibly unintended aspect of economic action;[2] and in Chapter 4 we stressed the 'extension' model of the development of superstructural consciousness as an alternative to the utilitarian approach.[3] The development of consciousness in

1 A similar point was made in Chapter 5 in relation to the assumption of ideal-typical economic motivation in the delineation of class situations; see above, p 111. The concept of economic motivation draws attention to the question of the degree of intentionality pertaining to economic action: in the ideal-type full intentionality is assumed. Economic motivation may of course be differentiated by kind as well as by degree: in addition to being more or less pronounced, it may include the ultimate ends within itself, or the economic ends towards which the actor is motivated may be means to other, non-economic ends, such as status or political power.

2 See above, Chapter 5, p 121

3 See above, Chapter 4, p 90 ff

substructure or superstructure thus cannot be seen solely as a rational act, though the influence of certain elements of class (e.g. conditions of economic action) is seen at its strongest where the action involved is conceived in ideal-typically rational terms.

Having thus presented arguments for a certain kind of general model - i.e. ideal-typical, rational (where action is involved), methodological individualist -, we may now proceed to see how general elements of world view (from Chapter 6) may develop in relation to elements of class (from Chapter 5). A preliminary comparison of the concepts of consciousness in substructure and superstructure is necessary at this stage.

### (vi) Comparison of Concepts of Substructural and Superstructural Consciousness

In Chapter 3 we outlined various elements of consciousness that may be developed from the substructure and that constitute superstructural consciousness through functioning more widely for the individual than merely in relation to the particular substructural action/situation.[1] The elements concerned were: materially pragmatic knowledge, legitimations (pre- and post-action), 'promotions' and 'extensions'.[2] In Chapter 6 a different characterisation of the superstructure was made in terms of concepts of consciousness form and content of a certain level of generality; attitude, cognitive style and cognitive structure. The reason for the difference between these two seemingly unrelated characterisations of consciousness is their differing purposes: the second characterisation is not concerned with how the superstructure developed, but with engendering concepts of consciousness form and content that would be capable of an adequate level of situational and temporal generality; while the first

[1] See above, Chapter 3, pp 81-82

[2] 'Extensions' are of course by definition emergent only at the superstructural level.

characterisation was intimately related to notions of consciousness development, in both utilitarian and non-utilitarian modes. The two characterisations are not necessarily synonymous: for instance, any of the widened elements of consciousness in the first characterisation may consitute an attitude; similarly a cognitive style may be an extension or adopted for utility; and though a legitimation or pragmatic knowledge cannot of itself constitute a cognitive style, the cognitive form thereof may be extended into a cognitive style.

In Chapter 6 we noted that it is useful to have a term (i.e. 'attitude'), applying over time and over different situations, and which will include cognitions, evaluations and sentiments, thus avoiding distinctions between the cognitive and the evaluative, and between that which is and is not consciously formulated.[1] Does this mean, then, that these finer distinctions of consciousness should be abandoned in superstructure and substructure, and be replaced even in the latter by 'attitude'? An inspection of Chapter 5 would suggest otherwise; in addition to a rational analysis in terms of means, ends and values (thus involving conscious formulations through sociological rationality), the analytical distinction between cognitions and evaluations is clearly advocated, e.g. in an analysis of the process through which the actor evaluates the ends or means which appear feasible to him. In the superstructure such distinctions lose their relevance in their less specific relation to action/situation: indeed, as noted in Chapter 3, on the more general level of belief systems etc. it is difficult (sometimes impossible) to distinguish between the existential and the evaluative.[2]

Looking at the problem from the point of view of 'attitude', it is clear that the generality of this concept is appropriate at the superstructural level, but that in the substructure we require concepts

[1] See above, Chapter 6, p 135

[2] See above, Chapter 3, p 87

of consciousness more specifically related to particular elements of class, rather than generalities that may develop therefrom. This at least is the case if we wish to analyse the development of consciousness in an individual in relation to his class, rather than merely providing an account of, for instance, an individual's habitual economic attitudes. We may, however, wish to give an account of the attitudes the individual brings to his class position, as long as the modification of these attitudes is seen through the interaction with specific elements of consciousness involved in, for instance, economic action.

'Cognitive style', possessing a level of generality equivalent to 'attitude', is similarly restricted to the superstructure in our model; but the more particular 'cognitive form' may, like cognitions and evaluations, be involved in the substructure. 'Cognitive structure', however, is applicable to both substructure and superstructure: as noted in Chapter 6 it has a greater variability of application,[1] and it may thus be used to investigate formal properties of the relationships between the elements of the actor's substructural (as well as superstructural) consciousness.

If 'world view' is defined, as in Chapter 6, as a loose agglomeration of the individual's (or even group's) consciousness, then it too cannot be confined to the superstructure, since all the elements of the individual's consciousness are part of his world view. Given that we must always start with the actor's definition of the situation, and then may see developments of his 'definitions' in relation to his experience of the situation or involvement in the action,'world view' will thus be present at the outset, during the development of consciousness in the substructure, and in the developed superstructure, which may itself be

[1] See above, Chapter 6, p 143

the starting point for future specific definitions and actions. This apparent circularity is more adequately described in spiral terms, as can be seen in a review of the 'career' process accounted in Chapter 5.[1]

Having compared alternative concepts of consciousness in relation to their function in the analysis of substructure and superstructure, we may now examine the process whereby superstructural consciousness may develop from a substructure of class elements.

(vii) The Process of World View Development in Relation to Class

We have already indicated, in this and previous chapters, possible modes of development of consciousness from the substructure, as well as concepts for the analysis of the actually developed superstructure. It should now be made more clear, however, what points of development are to be distinguished in the substructure, thus utilising our remarks in Chapter 5. These 'points of development' will consist of consciousness directly involved in the elements of class previously outlined, since, as indicated in Chapter 2, an 'ideal' superstructure cannot develop from a 'material' substructure.[2] One major point of development consists in the relationship between situation and values: some aspects of a situation may attain or render attainable certain values or ends, whose adoption is then favoured if they appeal to unformulised sentiments or are highly regarded in the society concerned. The situation in question may be the economic situation or work situation, or the conditions of economic action; these latter conditions may for instance render feasible certain ends, which themselves may constitute a new economic situation, perhaps attaining new values. Both actual and possible situation and action must thus be taken into account; though, in an analysis of the development of

[1] See above, Chapter 5, p 122

[2] See above, Chapter 2, pp 22-27

an individual's consciousness, motivation is likely to be stressed, with a consequent emphasis on the possible, and interest in the actual will be confined to work situation and developed economic situation. This applies equally to the second major 'point of development', which lies in the experience of certain elements of class: since we are using a rational model with respect to action,[1] the development of consciousness will be seen in terms of 'experience' only in relation to aspects of the work situation that are unintended consequences of economic action, or in relation to a developed economic situation.

The third point of development of consciousness in the substructure is that most particularly related to economic action, i.e. the development of consciousness of relevant aspects of economic action according to the selective criteria of one's economic ends. The actor's economic ends selectively direct his cognitive interest in the given conditions of his economic action and the means thereby delimited, these objective features of his action constituting the data cognised. A greater emphasis on such cognition is laid by strong economic motivation,[2] and such motivation also brings about evaluation of the means, since, if no other evaluative criteria are involved, the mere effectiveness of the means in bringing about economic advancement will arrange the means in an evaluative hierarchy. The potential hierarchal ordering of the means to economic advance thus constitutes an important objective feature of the actor's economic action; whilst the actual (subjective) hierarchy for the actor is a product of his cognitive/evaluative interest, and may thus be modified in practice by the degree of his economic motivation, by the extent to which he can acquire knowledge of the conditions of his economic action,

1 See above, p 162

2 This is why, in the construction of a general model to show the most powerful influence of class factors upon consciousness development, strong economic motivation is assumed.

by the exclusion of some forms of economic advance (and hence some means) by his specified economic ends, and by the exclusion of those means which counteract some of his other values (those, for instance, which are the ulterior reason for his economic ends).

Consciousness may thus develop in relation to economic action both through the data cognised (i.e. the objective features of the action), and through the subjective interest involved in the action, which makes cognition an active selective process, rather than a passive absorptive one. Clearly this latter point applies to all the areas of consciousness development through class - even 'experience'; but it is economic action that is doubly effective (through 'interest' and 'data') in the development of consciousness, except where the cognitive or evaluative interest derives from factors not intrinsically involved in the economic action.

Having outlined the three major 'points of development' of substructural consciousness, it may now be seen that the modes of development of superstructural consciousness implied in the characterisation of the latter in Chapter 3, are not all equally applicable at each point: materially pragmatic knowledge, 'promotions' and pre-action legitimations will all originate in the motivation to economic action, before functioning more widely as superstructure. Other legitimations may arise not only subsequent to economic action, but also in relation to the values and ends whose adoption is objectively favoured. 'Extensions' however may have their roots in any of the points of consciousness development: since they are not confined to utilitarian consciousness, they may develop even from experience of economic or work situation.

It is interesting at this point to note that extensions are especially likely to occur where the action/situation is particularly salient for the actor.[1] Strength of economic motivation may be one form that such

[1] See above, Chapter 4, p 92

salience may take, so that the actor becomes committed to extensions that derive from the consciousness involved in highly economically motivated actions. Strong economic motivation will tend to be related to the desire to maintain or alter one's present economic situation, and economic situation in turn may be more or less salient in different societies in conditioning other spheres of life.[1] A negative evaluation of one's present economic situation will tend to make one more conscious of the values, ends and means involved in one's economic action, thus reinforcing the argument that strong economic motivation (in this case associated with the negative evaluation) is a necessary element in a rational model of the most powerful influence of class elements upon the development of consciousness.

In the argument thus far in this section, it will be obvious how attitudes may develop from the 'points of consciousness development' through the modes of extension, legitimation or whatever: any of the Chapter 3 characterisations of superstructural consciousness will constitute an attitude in its meaningful content. It may however be worthwhile noting some possible developments of cognitive styles, and examining the role of cognitive structure.

Certain cases may present a potential development of attitude or cognitive style from a particular substructural cognition. For instance, the cognition that, whatever means one chooses, one will receive money without effort, may lead to a lack of concern about money, which in turn could lead either to a general attitude of devaluation of the importance of financial matters, or to a general cognitive (or possibly more appropriately evaluative) style of indifference, and lack of desire to commit oneself to anything.[2] This illustrates the difficulty in differentiating

[1] This reaffirms the importance of taking account of 'what economic situation attains'. See above, Chapter 5, p 120

[2] One may note that if commitment and indifference may be seen as evaluative styles, then clearly commitment could not be the/

between attitudes and cognitive/evaluative styles at certain levels: a style of indifference only to financial matters could be indistinguisable from an attitude - the distinction rests upon whether we are concerned with a general evaluation or a general form of evaluation, and the only way we can tell the difference in practice is if the style passes beyond the bounds of meaningful coherence, in which case its coherence must be formal.

It was mentioned in Chapter 6 that a cognitive structure may be influential in the development of a cognitive style.[1] This can be seen not only in the context of the mutual influence of superstructural elements upon one another, but in terms of the development of superstructural from substructural consciousness. Thus the structure of the cognitions directly involved in one's class may, for instance, be recognised as inconsistent, which may lead to a quality of hesitancy in the cognitive forms in the substructure, which in turn may be extended into a wider cautious cognitive style. In general terms, then, the substructural cognitive structure may give rise to cognitive styles that function more widely than merely in relation to the substructure.

An important field for the application of the concept of cognitive structure is that of the actor's class contacts over time. Several writers have noted the importance of social mobility, for example, as an influence upon the characteristics of an individual's thought: Daiches shows how a large number of English novelists have been subject to social mobility, thus leading to their:

> '... moral imagination (being) nourished by currents from more than one class.' (Daiches, 1971: 165)

the/
general mode of development of superstructural consciousness, since lack of commitment in the substructure may be extended to a general evaluative style of indifference.

[1] See above, Chapter 6, p. 141

Mannheim claims that social mobility acts as an important condition favouring the development of scepticism (1956: 149ff); and, in the context of his work on intellectuals, sees a tendency towards 'total orientation and synthesis' arising from the interaction, through their common educational heritage, of individuals with contrasting class backgrounds. (1936: 136ff) In our terms, then, the cognitive structure that includes those cognitions and evaluations of the actor that develop through his class contacts over time, may give rise to more widely functioning (e.g. relativistic) cognitive styles. Much here will depend upon how resistant the actor is to the views of those around him, i.e. to what extent he is 'compartmentalised' from the world view of his class contacts. As we have seen, 'cognitive structure' is applicable at several levels of generality: its application is appropriate if of use, e.g. as above in the explanation of the development of cognitive styles. One may, for instance, not only see the cognitive structure of the substructure in a broader temporal and interactional context, as just suggested, but may take a wider cognitive structure in the individual that would include spheres of his life other than class; the extent to which such a wider cognitive structure application is useful will again depend upon the degree of compartmentalisation, this time of the class sphere from other areas of the individual's life.

This point about the necessity of ascertaining the position of substructural consciousness in a broader individual context applies more widely to the investigation of superstructural development, and reinforces some of the arguments put forward in Chapter 4 concerning the relationship between substructure and superstructure, in particular the emphasis upon the structural and historical perspectives towards the individual and society,[1] and the exposition of the theory of elective affinity,[2] and hence the rejection of the conception of a necessarily

[1] See above, Chapter 4, pp 94-96

[2] See above, Chapter 4, pp 98-102

direct and contextless relationship between substructure and superstructure. Thus in concentrating on the components of the actor's world view that may develop from elements of his class, we must not overlook the fact that such developments will interact in some way with his previously formed world view, which will include the attitudes that he brings to the economic action itself, and possibly even specify the economic ends involved in such action. Thus the attitudes and cognitive styles that develop in relation to the individual's class enter into a process of mutual elective affinity with the components of his previously existent world view, thus leading to modifications in this world view over time. The previous world view may provide the criteria for selection amongst the possible legitimations, extensions etc., as well as amongst the potential elements of the substructural consciousness itself; whilst the newly developed consciousness may be decisive in the selection of what in the previous world view is to be retained. Furthermore, elements of the individual's world view should be seen in the context of the world view current in his social context at the time: class contacts, e.g. through work situation, may develop his substructural consciousness through a process of 'ideal pragmatism',[1] or this process may induce, through contacts with competing ideologies outside the field of social class, a more conscious formulation of the attitudes developed from substructural consciousness. A process of elective affinity may be found to obtain here too, where the individual selects his legitimations or promotions, for instance, from those available in his social context. These points further reinforce our arguments earlier in this chapter as to the importance of seeing the individual in the context of his social relationships.[2]

[1] See above, Chapter 3, p 78

[2] See above, section iv.

(viii) Conclusion

In this chapter we have attempted to bring together the work on class as substructure (Chapter 5) and world view as superstructure (Chapter 6) in the light of the more developmental categories of consciousness of Chapter 3 and the general characterisation of substructure-superstructure relations in Chapter 4.

In tracing the development of superstructural consciousness, the analytical roles of the concepts of consciousness put forward in Chapter 3 and 6 were compared, and were seen in relation to certain key 'points of development' of consciousness in the substructure. Three major points of development were outlined: the relations of values and ends to possible or actual economic or work situation; the 'experience' of work situation or developed economic situation; and consciousness of relevant aspects of economic action according to the selective criteria of one's economic ends. The development of the actor's consciousness was not however taken out of the context of his wider world view and the world views of his contemporaries: questions of compartmentalisation and the breadth of applicability of 'cognitive structure' were discussed here; and the picture of class-conditioned world view development that emerged was one of spiral rather than circular development and rather than mere determination by objective conditions. Further specification of a social context of consciousness development was provided by the concept of 'class contacts', whether face-to-face or through identification or 'taking account': particular emphasis was placed upon the potential significance of social contacts in the work situation. 'Priority' of class contacts, lack of alternative social contacts, and the salience of economic situation/action and work situation for the individual, were all seen to be relevant conditions of the degree of influence of class factors.

## P A R T  I I I :  LITERATURE AS A SPECIAL CASE

## INTRODUCTION TO PART III

The chapters in this part of the thesis serve as a link between the general model developed in the previous chapters, and the empirical analysis of the novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë. Before applying to these particular cases the model of how world view may be conditioned by class factors, it is necessary to examine the special problems that authors and novels present to those who wish to relate the world views of the latter to class elements associated with the former. It has been made clear several times in previous chapters that our interest lies in the development of an individual's thought in relation to class factors, and this will be seen to be the case both in the orientation of this chapter and in the empirical work on the Brontës. But even if it were possible to deal with individual authors simply in terms of the class concepts developed in previous chapters (and we shall see that this is not the case), then we should still face the problem of the status of 'world views' in literature and of developing a methodology for literary interpretation for the purposes of sociological analysis. Our aim then is to bring together the perspectives of the sociology of knowledge and the sociology of literature in a particular approach to literature that neglects neither the author nor the literary work. The emphasis upon the author means that our interest is directed more towards the creation than the reception of the work, except insofar as this latter influences, through knowledge or expectations thereof, the literary work itself.

Raymond Williams has claimed that literature is one of the most important of the documents available for the cultural interpretation of past eras. (1965: 65) This view would add justification, if any were felt to be necessary, for selecting for detailed analysis authors and their expressions, out of the manifold occupations that one might have

chosen. The reliability of these 'documents' however remains debatable: to what extent and of what exactly are they documents, and how far should we treat literature as a special case, for which modified models and characteristic methods are necessary?

In these chapters, then, we shall explore the nature of literature as a special case for the application of the general model of class and world view developed above. The special nature of literature will be examined in the first three chapters in terms of the literary role, the literary act and the literary form, remembering in each section that we are not dealing with all that might be included under such general headings, but rather with the particular aspects with which we are concerned, and which will be of use in our analysis of the novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, e.g. the author role, fiction as a literary form, etc. The final chapter in this Part will review the methodology for the sociological interpretation of literature suggested by a writer to whose work we paid considerable attention in Part One: Lucien Goldmann; and will conclude with an attempt to tackle several basic methodological issues that arise from Goldmann's work.

## CHAPTER 8: THE LITERARY ROLE

### (i) Introduction

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyse the author role as a class role, and thus to apply to authorship the model that we have already outlined in previous chapters concerning the development of consciousness from class elements. In this connection it is worth pointing out what we are not trying to do: we are not attempting to put forward a theory of the sort of class conditions that tend to engender literary creativity in general, as may be found in Daiches (1971) account of the influence of social mobility upon the literary imagination, and in Mannheim's (1956: 147ff) study of the social roots of reflectivity and scepticism amongst dispossessed intellectuals. Nor are we concerned with an analysis of the general conditions which engender authorship as a specialised institutional role in the division of labour. And since we are principally interested in the development of an individual's thought in relation to class factors, our study cannot cover the case of the individual who merely adopts through his background the consciousness already associated with a certain class.

### (ii) Authorship as a Class Role

What then are the principal ways in which 'class' is most relevant to the study of the author? A model of the author in terms of ideal-typical economic motivation and rational motive-action connection would reveal the strongest influence of class elements, but there is no point in repeating here this model as outlined in Chapter 7, except insofar as it bears directly upon the role of author. Perhaps the particularity of the author role may be revealed through its characteristic 'class contacts'[1],

[1] See above, Chapter 7, p 157

such as publishers, critics and audience who may influence the author's economic success, or fellow authors with whom he may associate to improve the conditions of his economic action, as where professional author-groups form and attempt to control the access to key positions in the literary role-system (Fügen, 1968: 26). Yet such facets of professionalisation are not peculiar to authors. Similarly one might emphasise as a possible condition of strong class influence upon the author's world view the narrowness of his class contacts[1], in the extreme case all the literary role-set sharing a similar class-situation with the author, and all literary contacts being 'class contacts'. Yet this would not reveal the special nature of the contact involved in the author role. It is the characteristic nature of authorship, though shared with other intellectual occupations, that the economic action involved is at the same time a production, or at least expression, of consciousness. This gives authorship its peculiarity of being subject in its very economic action to a twofold class influence: the literary work is in the extreme case modified in accordance with the expectations of those who can apply, or influence the application of, economic sanctions; and the 'accordance' may furthermore be with the class-related attitudes of these economically significant persons. Thus a rational class model of the author would see the development, or at least expression, of consciousness as a rational act, since, unlike most other forms of economic action[2], development/expression of consciousness is part of the economic action itself. In connection with a class model of authorship, then, the expression of the author's consciousness should be seen in purely utilitarian terms as far as he is concerned, the consciousness expressed being either of direct

1 See above, Chapter 7, p 158

2 See above, Chapter 7, pp 162-163

utility for those who constitute the economically rewarding audience, or of sufficient affinity with their consciousness to render acceptance and positive appreciation likely; yet the consciousness expressed may be seen as only of indirect utility for the author, i.e. through economic rewards. In such circumstances the biographical investigation of the author would appear irrelevant, as Goldmann (1967: 497) indeed suggests is generally the case. It may be, of course, that the literary form acceptable to the audience is merely a traditional one, part of a relatively autonomous literary sphere with little connection with non-literary consciousness whether in terms of affinity or utility. In such a case the rational economic author might still adopt such a traditional form for the indirect utility for him of its acceptability to his potential audience.

Turning from the special character of economic action for the author, a more daunting challenge to the class model is presented if we simply ask in what ways the author can support himself economically, as this question, which jumps readily to mind as soon as one considers the author in economic terms, already implies the possibility that authorship is not the principal economic role for the individual author, may be undertaken chiefly for non-economic reasons, and indeed is not necessarily seen in occupational terms at all. The ideal-typical economic motivation of our general model is precisely what one cannot assume for authors, which is not to say that all the author's non-economic orientations are merely random and that sociological rationality is in this case inapplicable: rather one must study the role and orientations of authorship in their own right and not merely in class terms, yet through the framework of means, ends and values that has been used with advantage in the analysis of class in previous chapters.

One of the reasons why one must study the author role in its own right is that without such study one could not ascertain the importance of class elements amongst others that make up the situation of a particular author. Yet even if we find that in a certain case the class model is irrelevant to the study of the author role, this does not imply that the model may not be applied to the individual outside his role as author, and that his class situation may not influence the development of consciousness subsequently expressed in his literary works. In other words we may still investigate the development of consciousness from class elements in an individual even where his authorship cannot be seen in class terms.

As suggested above, the class elements of the author role are likely to be most prominent when this is the sole means of income and the sole motivation for literary action. That this is not the rule is indicated by Laurenson's study of a sample of 170 writers who were born or died between 1860 and 1910 and who produced their work mainly in Great Britain:

> 'In spite of the achievements of Besant towards the professionalisation of the author's role and the improvement in their position during the nineteenth century, most writers - with the exception of women - needed remuneration from second jobs at some time during their life. ... Of those with no listed alternate or alternative job, we find seven with considerable private incomes and only four keeping themselves entirely as writers.'
>
> (1969: 317-318)

Nevertheless the class-related consciousness of the audience may exert strong influence upon the author's writing, particularly where publicly recognised 'success' in one form or another is his principal aim, thus leading him to pay close attention to the expectations of those with whom he wishes to be successful, e.g. colleagues, critics, a select or wider audience. The 'success' though is not necessarily economically sought, but may be valued for the sake of fame or simply for the feeling

of pride engendered in the author when his merit is publicly affirmed. The question whether 'success' must include an economic aspect will depend upon how public recognition of literary worth is accorded in the society concerned. Equally significant is the matter of 'what economic situation attains'[1] in the case of the economically successful author: an elevated economic situation may be less effective in attaining social status, and hence perhaps less salient for the author, than literary merit recognised by elite critics. Authorship may be a role in which the highest economic rewards are not always correlated with the highest status rewards. Bourdieu however suggests that these two kinds of reward are in fact often associated: the artist is now

> ' ... confronted with a public, an undifferentiated, impersonal and anonymous 'mass' of faceless readers. These readers are a market composed of potential buyers able to give to a work that economic sanction which, in addition to assuring the artist's economic and intellectual independence, is not always entirely lacking in cultural legitimacy.'
>
> (1971: 164)

Thus far we have applied to the situation of the author two of the principal elements of our previously developed conception of class: economic action (the characteristic economic action of the author) and what economic situation attains (the values that are associated with attaining elevated economic situations through authorship). Are we not equally able to apply the concept of work situation and include under this the facets of the author role that would otherwise escape under the application of the class model? This would obviously be neat and convenient, yet it would mean distorting the meaning of work situation as outlined in Chapter 5.[2] 'Work situation' may certainly indicate

[1] See above, Chapter 7, p 169

[2] See above, Chapter 5, p 120

important non-economic aspects of the author role, but only where this latter is undertaken for economic motives, and it is clear that this is not necessarily the case. We must take account of writing which, although perhaps achieving income, is not undertaken for any such aim, and yet which involves experiences and evaluations which are formative of further consciousness. Authorship must be seen as a social role instead of merely an economic role, so that for instance the social relations which are engaged in as an author, irrespective of whether one's motivation is economic or otherwise, must be considered, and not merely in economic light as 'class contacts', but rather perhaps as 'role contacts'.

Such a conception of literary role-relationships implies a concern with literature as an institution, a concern that sometimes excludes consideration of author orientations, let alone strictly economic ones, unless fully institutionalised in Parsonian fashion.

(iii) Authorship as an Institutional Role

Few would agree with Kavolis (1968: 6-7) when he justifies not dealing with the social organisation of artistic enterprise since it can hardly be regarded as the basic sociological determinant of style, even though, he admits, the relationships between artistic expression and sociocultural conditions operate within a definite institutional structure, and elements of this may modify art style. Yet even if the institutional aspects of art are not regarded as 'the basic' determinant, it does not mean they are unimportant conditioning factors which may be ignored. Other writers indeed give this aspect of literature prominence in their studies: Fügen, for instance, claiming that literary action is a special form of interpersonal behaviour that is differentiated from

other categories of social action, regards the investigation of the institutional aspects of literary action as one of the two main branches of the sociology of literature. (1968: 19) Bourdieu insists that account is taken of the institutionalised 'intellectual field' which has become an increasingly complex system,

> '... increasingly independent of external influences (which from this point on must pass through the mediating structure of the field) ...'
>
> (1971: 163)

The view of literature as an institution will lead to the consideration of the various members of the literary role set, their expectations of the author, and the sanctions they are willing and able to use. Yet neither consensus nor clarity nor rigidity can be assumed: the author may be subject to conflicting, ambiguous or flexible role expectations; and, as we shall see,[1] the analysis of the literary role system will be inadequate if undertaken from a supposedly external point of view: expectations and sanctions will influence the author principally through his conception of them and his evaluation of their significance, and his actions will furthermore be influenced by his attitude towards the literary system as a whole.

Several writers go beyond a general description of literature in institutional terms, and focus more directly upon the position of the author within the system. Laurenson (1969: 320-322) presents a typology of writers, with two polar extremes of institutionalisation and individualisation. The latter type appears to be favoured by Wilson, who regards the artist as:

> '... almost by definition a deviant and isolated individual. His angle of vision renders him exceptional.'
>
> (1973: 10)

[1] See below, section (iv), p 190

The artist's deviance, however, is 'positive' according to Wilson, since he is an innovator, who presents fresh values and perspectives to the world. This is reminiscent of Duvignaud's view of the artist as an atypical individual:

> '... the artistic sign is a 'group of meanings', all the more unsettling because it is always created by an atypical individual, someone who frees himself from immediate reality by putting forward an order and a new arrangement which offers a different image of man ...'
> (1972: 55)

Clearly such a view can make certain important points on the roots of artistic creativity, in that the original artist is likely to have been exposed to an atypical set of circumstances, in the same way as, Mannheim suggests, the sceptical intellectual is the product of displacement from a privileged social class (1956: 149ff); but not all artists are so original, or indeed so atypical.

Kern does not take this extreme position on the artist's atypicality, since he stresses group affiliation; but he does regard the artist as 'free-floating' in the Mannheimian sense:

> 'Even more important than the group into which an author is born is the group with which he affiliates. This is true because authors tend to become 'free' intellectuals, men who through insight and education are able to see through the traditions of their own group, and to ally themselves intellectually with any other sector of society. ... This new attachment will become more important than the author's origin. Or to put it another way, the type of public to which the author addresses himself will tend to shape his work.'
> (1942: 510)

Kern's hypothesis of the importance of group affiliation will appear less universally applicable if we question his assumption that authors are free-floating (i.e. group of birth may continue to be vital for some), and if we take into account the possibility of Laurenson's extreme type of individualised authors, who, as relative isolates, may not affiliate to any social group, or who may form a specifically literary clique rather than affiliating to a pre-existent social group.

Yet although Laurenson's typology helps us to avoid narrow universalistic descriptions of the artist's position, it cannot account for what is, according to Bourdieu, the modern institutionalised nature of legitimated high art, a situation that combines the Romantic self-conceptions of Laurenson's individualised writers, with a high degree of institutionalisation. For Bourdieu, the intellectual or artist, faced with a mass market for his work, cultivates an ambition for autonomy, for a separation of himself and his universe from the everyday world, and refuses -

> '... to recognise any but the ideal reader, who must be an 'alter ego', that is, another intellectual, present or future, able to assume in his creation or comprehension of works of art the same truly intellectual vocation which characterises the autonomous intellectual as one who recognises only intellectual legitimacy.'
> (1971: 165)

And yet, despite this appearance of radical autonomy, the artist's work is especially likely to foster the mirror-conception of self:

> 'Few social actors depend as much as artists, and intellectuals in general, for what they are and for the image that they have of themselves on the image that other people have of them and of what they are.'
> (1971: 166)

The 'intellectual field', which maintains a certain autonomy from external influences, is nonetheless highly institutionalised according to the specific logic of competition for cultural legitimacy (1971: 163), which legitimacy, associated with the denial of concern for public response, is at least preliminarily arranged by the members of the intellectual field itself, often in Schücking's 'mutual admiration societies' to which Bourdieu draws attention. (1971: 165) This is not to deny that such 'intellectual consecration' may require the confirmation of economic viability amongst a wider public (1971: 164), and thus the role of the public may be considerably greater than admitted

in the self-conceptions of the artist. Bourdieu indeed allows that the public may have a more direct influence upon the self-image of artists than merely through their economic power: they may take what is perhaps just a coincidence of authors published under the same format and identify them as a school, in such a way that the authors involved take account of one another in their future work and conform to their newly constituted public image. (1971: 172)

Bourdieu does not claim universal applicability for the kind of institutionalisation and relative autonomy that he portrays: the situation is historically and culturally limited. Yet his study reveals the potential complexity of factors involved in describing the artist's position within the literary system, and indeed in describing the system itself. Common to this and to most other studies of the author's position is the concern with his degree of autonomy. Most would conclude that the nature of literary work can grant greater autonomy to the author than to other workers, in at least two respects: there is some degree of expectation of creativity from the author; and, as Fügen points out, the very fictional character of literature allows experiment without risk, without irreversible consequences (1968: 22). Nevertheless, Fügen adds, there is almost always some limitation upon this freedom: the limitation may simply exist in the form of 'die künstlerische Verschlüsselung' (1968: 22), an art world which remains locked for all those who have not acquired the necessary cultural key,[1] thus resulting in a restriction of readership and hence of the diffusion of the ideas in the literary work. Where this cultural enclosure is thought to be insufficiently effective, or simply non-existent, the literary

[1] A similar point is made in another article by Bourdieu (1968), in which the understanding of works of art is seen to depend upon access to adequate interpretive codes.

questioning of norms may be subject to a variety of sanctions, ranging from derogatory labels for the work (such as 'trash') and loss of prestige for the author, to censorship and punishment by the relevant authorities; though such sanctions may be warded off through public disclaimers made by the author.

The question of autonomy is closely related to that of comparmentalisation: as implied by both Fügen and Bourdieu, the literary world may be more or less publicly compartmentalised from non-literary roles and actions. Furthermore, in accordance with our emphasis upon the 'actor' rather than the 'individual'[1], authorship may be a role played by the individual and involving a relatively autonomous province of meaning for him[2]: the literary actor may be relatively divorced from the economic actor etc., and thus his attitudes may not extend over all provinces. This twofold potentiality of compartmentalisation may be highly significant where the influence of, for instance, a class-related cognitive structure is concerned.[3] In the case of the author, the significance of the cognitive structure of his literary role contacts will depend on the degree to which he is aware of expectations and obtains feedback of response: he may be relatively distanced from the

1 See above, Chapter 7, pp 150-153

2 'Relatively autonomous' seems preferable to 'finite', as it avoids the apparent corollary of an 'infinite' and basic 'everyday life', which we should regard as itself capable of including several relatively autonomous spheres. In other words, we find Berger & Luckmann's 'relatively autonomous universes of meaning' (1967: 104) more plausible and more useful than the contrast between 'finite provinces of meaning' and 'the paramount reality of everyday life'. (1967: 39) It should be noted that Schutz himself (from whom Berger and Luckmann take many of their concepts and much of their argument) considers the paramount reality of everyday life to be nonetheless a finite province of meaning. (Schutz, 1973: 230)

3 See above, Chapter 7, pp 170-171

various groups that make up his audience and from their consciousness, and hence unaware of any contradiction between his world view and theirs and indeed of any inconsistency in the cognitive structure of the literary participants. Similarly the author may be compartmentalised in his literary activity with respect to his other activities, in which case characteristics (such as inconsistency) of his overall cognitive structure will be neither apparent to nor problematic for him.

It is by now clear that the relative strength of the numerous variables that may come to influence the author in his work will, as Laurenson points out, vary historically, i.e. -

> '... according to the period in which the author is writing, and according to the pulls and pressures, sanctions and opportunities, which are operating, moulding the way in which he structures his world, affecting the presentation of his material.'
> (1972: 91)

We must however take particular note of the importance of the subjectivity of the author in its effect upon the strength of the more objective variables that may influence him.

(iv) The Ends and Values of the Author

Many of those whose views on the author role we have already considered have in their statements implied certain typical aims on the part of authors, e.g. the formulation of fresh values and perspectives (Wilson), or the competition for cultural legitimacy (Bourdieu). Indeed few would deny that the subjective aspect of the author role is relevant to the sociological study of authorship, though some would restrict the analysis of this aspect to that which falls within the field of the normative. Fügen for instance argues that the sociology of literature should not concern itself with the manifold motives for literary

action, but rather with literary behaviour that shows a relative stability, and with those invariances that provide a reliable orientation to participant individuals. He is thus concerned with role-expectations and -fulfilments, with normative behaviour that is independent of individual motives. (1968: 19) This would imply that unless individual motives are normatively oriented, then they are irrelevant to the fulfilment of the author role. Where they are irrelevant in this way, as must be the case with a large proportion of the unconscious motivations that could be involved in the decision to write literature, then we agree with Fügen that they fall outside of the province of sociology. Yet there exist several motivations which are neither so neatly structured as to fall within the sphere of predominant, normative role-conceptions, nor so unique and deeply unconscious as to defy explication in rational terminology. It is these orientations (which are by no means unconnected with role-expectations and -fulfilments) of which we wish to take account in the sociological study of the individual author. The role of author cannot adequately be seen in purely objective or normative terms: as mentioned in Chapter 5,[1] some cognitions and evaluations may be necessary for the individual to be in the position at all, but if we are to study the influence of his situation and action upon his thought, we cannot neglect the consciousness he brings to the situation which cannot be derived from an analysis of the position itself; and whilst it may be claimed that any situation necessarily involves certain forms of experience, the description thereof may be infinite unless seen in relation to the individual's ends and values. From this statement, which is a broader version of one previously constructed in relation to economic situation, it may be seen

[1] See above, Chapter 5, p. 119

that much of our general approach to class in previous chapters may be applied to the analysis of the literary role, so that one may ask such questions as: what are the author's ends and values in relation to his literary activity? what is his attitude towards the existing literary system as a whole? and to what extent do his literary ends and values involve commitment to a personal, literary or wider societal system of actions?

In the analysis of the individual's ends and values in relation to his role as author, we must not assume that he has a positive evaluation of writing in itself, or indeed even for extrinsic reasons: his writing may in some cases be understood better in terms of conformity than of deliberate choice. An example of this may be seen as a corollary of Laurenson's argument that, with increasing monetary rewards in the nineteenth century, -

> '... The romantic image of the writer could be reconciled with the Victorian ethos of self-help, 'respectability' and pecuniary stability.'
>
> (1969: 316)

- i.e. one may find cases in which authorship was not only reconciled with this ethos, but indeed was the only means of conformity thereto for a particular individual. If his interest in authorship amounts to little more than such conformity, then presumably he will attempt to satisfy sufficiently the expectations of those who are able to guarantee his economic security etc. If however he has more positive motives for writing, then we can no longer be satisfied with an outline of predominant role-expectations, as Fügen would provide us with, but rather we must accept that the author's ends and values will effect the degree of consideration that he grants to the views of different groups amongst those who receive his work.

Concerning author motivation, just as we have seen with descriptions of author positions, some sociologists are prone to make statements of intended universal applicability: Wilson, for instance, suggests that, apart from economic rewards, -

> 'The other major type of reward on which artists depend is the approbation of a peculiarly qualified audience. This audience may perhaps be best characterised as a select jury of one's peers. ... what is important is not their numbers but their quality.'
> (1973: 10)

Wilson considers such moral support to be comparable with that of other professionals in science and scholarship. Admittedly Wilson is writing of the 'fine' artist, yet even here the assumption that such rewards are universally sought seems untenable. Bramstedt suggests that the writer's choice of audience is a more complex matter: there may be a gap between his ideal and his actual public. (1964: 261ff) He may, as Wilson suggests, take as his 'significant others' a small group of intellectuals, but these may be able to offer him little financial support. Thus his choice of audience may determine his livelihood, and in turn reflect his ambition, disinterest, etc., in the economic sphere; and furthermore his acceptance by a particular audience may determine (and thus be sought for) social status. (Bramstedt, 1964: 332) In sum, Bramstedt would claim that the author's evaluations of class and status will influence his choice of audience because of the latter's effect in turn upon his class and status position.

To choose an audience may be seen as offering to that audience the power to wield positive and negative sanctions according to one's performance; and, as we have seen, different audiences have access to different sanctions, so that in choosing one's audience one may be declaring one's evaluation of the various rewards available. Thus the

most directly influential role contacts will be those that are of greatest salience[1] for the author, i.e. that are most significant in relation to his ends and values. We must not however forget the point made in Chapter 5,[2] that the ends and values that are likely to be adopted are those that are seen as feasible: thus an author who receives unfavourable reviews from critics but achieves popular success may adjust his values accordingly, and, in so doing, decrease the salience of critics, and increase that of his wider audience. It would seem plausible to hypothesise that this reaction is more frequently found than that in which there is a devaluation of what is achieved against what might have been.

The influence of success upon the author, whichever groups are involved in its recognition, and whether its rewards are of prestigious or financial character (or both), is clearly a case which indicates the importance of taking account of the author's values and ends: not only may the author's values lay greater or lesser emphasis on the different forms of success, but his values may influence the choice of means to success in such a way that the most rational means may be avoided if they clash with his values.[3] Furthermore, as we have seen, achieved success may bring within the bounds of feasibility new ends and values (a new position may achieve previously unformulised values and provide altered conditions of action), whose adoption thus becomes more "realistic", His new 'role-situation', e.g. with enhanced cultural legitimacy and/or economic standing, may thus act as a significant 'point of development' of his consciousness.[4] Yet

1 See above, Chapter 4, p 92 and Chapter 7, pp 168-169

2 See above, Chapter 5, p 122

3 See above, Chapter 5, pp 122-123

4 See above, Chapter 7, p 166

even without achieving success, and thus altering his literary standing, the author's consciousness may develop simply through experience of the unintended consequences of literary action.[1]

Finally in this section we shall look at the author's attitude to the wider literary system, an attitude comprising cognitions and evaluations which are both influential upon his action within that system, and in turn derive from the action. One might hypothesise that those who attempt to publish their work tend to have a commitment[2] to the literary system, and to its legitimating ideologies (such as that good works will be published, or will even achieve success in terms of critical acclaim and both quality and quantity of audience); and further that those who do achieve success are confirmed in their commitment (upon which perhaps now depends a new and rewarding self-image with which they would be unwilling to part). This hypothesis is of course difficult to uphold in the face of authors' claims that they care nothing for the reactions of critics and the wider audience; yet such an attitude may be found to be a rationalisation adopted against the possibility of being disappointed or hurt by adverse criticism or low sales. Protest is, in any case, usually directed against particular individuals or the existing system: faith may nonetheless be maintained that if only one's work can be published then at least a future audience will understand and appreciate it.

## (v) Conclusion

In this chapter we have attempted to see authorship in terms of the class model developed in previous chapters. Although we indicated the kind of situation in which we should find an ideal-typical influence

[1] See above, Chapter 7, p 167

[2] See above, Chapter 2, p 33

of class elements, it became clear that, in order to examine the relationship between an author's class and the world view of his literary works, the author role itself must be taken into account, even (or perhaps especially) where its non-economic aspects mediate the influence of class elements. Nevertheless it has been seen that many of the concepts developed in previous chapters in relation to the class model may be fruitfully applied to the analysis of author roles. In particular, the application of sociological rationality has meant going beyond the analysis of the author in purely normative institutional terms, to include the not necessarily institutionalised ends and values that the individual brings to the author role-situation.

In the next chapter we shall take up various points from this chapter for further development, in particular (1) the notion that the literary act of the author is characterised by its involving the development or expression of consciousness in the act itself; and (2) the emphasis upon the special nature of the contact involved in the author role, and upon the significance of audience-groups as elements of the social context of expression.[1]

[1] These points were introduced on pp.179-180 of this chapter.

## CHAPTER 9: THE LITERARY ACT

### (i) Introduction

In this chapter we examine the 'literary act' of the author, in order to ascertain whether its literary quality demands the application of particular concepts and models. Garfinkel has argued that social actions can be seen as 'documents' (Garfinkel, 1972: 358): to what extent is literary action a special kind of document?

We deal first with two common characterisations of literature, i.e. in terms of the theory of art as communication, and as expression. The implications of these views are critically explored, followed by a re-assertion of the significance of the social context of literary 'communication' or 'expression'. This last section thus points to social reasons for the peculiarity of literature as a document; whereas the next chapter ('The Literary Form') concentrates upon the formal aspects of literature that must be taken into account in an interpretation and explanation of world views.

### (ii) The Literary Act as Communication

Probably the most generally held view in the sociology of literature is that literature, along with all the arts, is a mode of communication; communication is furthermore held to be the predominant motivation of the artist; and there is often the assumption that, at least in 'successful' art, communication is achieved - the artist manages to convey a meaningful experience to the audience. Raymond Williams is one of the most ardent supporters of this view:

> 'Art cannot exist unless a working communication can be reached, and this communication is an activity in which both artist and spectator participate. When art communicates, a human experience is actively offered and actively received. Below this activity threshold there can be no art.' (1965: 42)

Later in the same chapter Williams modifies this simplistic view of art by introducing various complicating factors such as the 'time-lag' (1965:

49), i.e. successful art is that which eventually communicates. Certainly the assumptions of the naive view of art as communication would make the task of the sociologist much easier: as with the concept of 'intersubjectivity', one could conveniently forget many of the problems of interpretation, and literature, insofar as it merited the label 'art', would become merely a means of successful communication between the subjectivity of artist and audience. Sahay indicates the simplistic nature of such a view in another context: the sociology of language. He suggests that the assumption of the intersubjectivity of language depends on superficial analyses of institutional linguistic norms, rather than on the analysis of 'real' language, i.e. the multiple possible variations of meaning. (1975: 56)

In association with the idea of a time-lag of literary understanding, Williams makes the distinction between the personal meanings of the artist and the common meanings of his audience: if the distance between these meanings is great, the artist may be involved in a long hard struggle to find means of communication that will bridge the gap. (1965: 48-49) This of course still implies the motivation to communicate, but does not assume its immediate success. The distinction between personal and common meanings underlies Bourdieu's view of art perception as involving the mastery of the code inherent in the work of art: communication depends on a sharing of codes, and the original artist who developes new forms to communicate his personal meanings must of necessity be ahead of his time, his work being adequately understood only after the new code has been mastered. (Bourdieu, 1968: 600)

As soon as one admits the possibility of a divergence between the meanings of artist and audience, various problems are raised, such as: which audience groups are capable of comprehending the work of art? to what extent does the artist have these groups in mind in the process of creation? and to what extent is the artist concerned with communication anyway, i.e. can we in fact assume communication to be one of his ends? It may

certainly be suggested that the artist, even in the sphere of 'high art', usually has some audience in mind, though this may be only a select group of his colleagues. Yet even if at times consideration of audience can be shown to be relatively insignificant, and furthermore if we can demonstrate in a minority of cases a lack of desire on the part of the artist to communicate with <u>any</u> others, we may nonetheless wish to retain the theory of art as communication as a general hypothesis to be applied in each case; for the value of such a theory lies less in its universal validity than in the direction it gives to our perception. We are encouraged by this theory to look for <u>attempts</u> by the artist to communicate, whilst recognising that the force with which such attempts are made is a matter of degree.

This general principle of looking for attempts by the artist to communicate will make the researcher more perceptive of efforts to convince an audience of, for example, the realism and legitimacy of a fictional course of action. Such communication endeavours are amongst the most important elements to be included in the sociological interpretation of literary work, as we shall see in section (iii) below. Bourdieu, working on a distinction made by Paul Valery between works that create their own public and those that are created by their public, puts forward a continuum of audience relevance, from the 'best-selling authors', where one assumes -

> ' ... that social pressures ... carry more weight in their intellectual project than the intrinsic necessity of the work of art.'

to those authors who -

> ' ... in refusing to conform to the expectations of actual readers, impose the demands which the necessity of the work enforces on them, without conceding anything to the idea, anticipated or experienced, that readers form or will form of their work. (1971: 167)

One may note that one of the implications of this is that obscurity may come to be seen by artists, critics and audience alike as a sign of high art, as clearly a new code is involved and furthermore one which presents

such difficulties of deciphering as to indicate the artist's lack of care for audience response, and hence his claim to high art status! A cynic might go further and suggest that obscurity, at least up to a certain point, may be highly prized by professional interpreters (critics, academics), as it provides them with more work and justifies their professional existence: this may apply particularly to literary works where there is thought to be a complicated but objective code to crack, and where the interpreter's expertise may be demonstrated and his claim thereto justified.[1]

So far we have indicated the positive and negative evaluations to be made of the theory of art as communication from artist to audience. Some theorists, however, consider artistic communication to be more fully interactive than this (i.e. not just communication, but interaction); whilst others emphasise the integrative functions of artistic communication (i.e. not just communication, but integration). Albrecht finds both of these tendencies in the work of H. D. Duncan, in whose view literature is a kind of language for communicating between people: a means of social interaction. Albrecht sees in the emphasis upon interaction the implication of a high degree of solidarity and congruence of interpretations amongst the literary participants. He rightly considers such a model to be unrealistic, in that literary communication is not necessarily interactive at all, but is rather a chain of communication with possible feedback. (1970: 4-6)

The view of art as integrative is however quite widely held: Kavolis puts forward the functionalist theory of art, according to which art either embodies the values of the status quo, or, in times of social change, aids the reintegration of society by providing new 'symbolic foci of sociocultural integration'. (1968: 5) Yet it is not just the

[1] James Joyce's 'Finnegan's Wake' may be an example of this kind of literary work.

functionalists who emphasise integration: George Mead, for instance, puts forward a view of aesthetic experience that is peculiarly utilitarian and collectivist. He presents aesthetic experience -

> ' ... as a part of the attempt to interpret complex social life in terms of the goals toward which our efforts run.' (1926: 384-5);

so that, for Mead, the politician's portrayal of the final utopia for which he is striving is an aesthetic act. This then is a goal-oriented conception that contrasts strikingly with Kant's notion of disinterestedness in aesthetics. There is moreover in Mead's conception of aesthetics a particular emphasis upon integrative goals, as seen for instance in his comments on enjoyment in reading newspapers: whether this enjoyment -

> ' ... has an aesthetic function or not depends upon whether the story of the news ... serves to interpret to the reader his experience as the shared experience of the community of which he feels himself to be a part.' (1926: 390)

Similarly it seems that Mead is critical of the aesthetic potentiality of the movie, when he claims that -

> 'It does not lend itself readily to shared experience.' (1926: 391)

Genuine aesthetics are for Mead far from being escapist: they should lead us to find value in the life that we live; they should inspire us to productive activity and to recognise, in a rather Durkheimian sense, our relationships with others, perhaps in cooperative effort. Aesthetics for Mead constitutes a bringing together of the technical and the final into an aesthetic totality that incorporates means and ends, self and others, by relating means to ends and self to others.

Those new to the sociology of literature may be forgiven for thinking that such statements as those just discussed are the unrepresentative ideas of an idiosyncratic philosopher: such unfortunately is not the case. Value-judgements cloaked as philosophical statements with pretensions to universal validity, or doubly cloaked as socio-

logical facts, abound in the sociology of art. This is not to deny that amongst such statements one may find hypotheses that show insight and that may be profitably employed in more analytic studies. The work of Jean Duvignaud is a good example of such a case. His five 'working hypotheses' on artistic creation (1972: 48ff) are well worth examination, even though underlying them (and in particular the 'polemic sign' hypothesis - 1972: 51-52) is a narrow philosophy of art, that itself appears to rest upon an evaluation of the optimal function of art. Here again we find the theory of art as communication, but taken far beyond the comparatively modest claims of Raymond Williams:

> ' ... a work of art (is) an attempt to overcome an obstacle - ... this obstacle consists of everything that prevents the total communication which the artist, whatever his materials, cannot choose but try to realise.' (Duvignand, 1972: 50)

> ' ... every significant imagined action is a communication from a distance which is never reconciled to this distance. We say 'from a distance' because if men did not have to reach out to one another, separated by space and time, through the barriers created by groups and classes, they would not need to rely on signs any more than on the imaginary.' (1972: 52, Duvignaud's emphasis)

The aim of art, then, is 'total communication', prevented by distancing obstacles without which art would not be necessary. This view would appear to see art as the solution to Durkheim's problems of social integration; for both artist and audience the chief motivation seems to be 'complete integration' (1972: 143).

The view of art as not just trying to communicate, but aiming at integration or total communication, is the most radical version of the theory of art as communication; and if we had doubts about the more modest versions, then we shall be still more unwilling to accept uncritically the integrative theories that read into art yet more assumptions concerning its nature and purposes.

So far in this section we have reviewed the common conception of art as a form of communication, and have taken from this a positive

contribution in the form of a direction for analytic perception - the search for attempts to communicate; and we have made a brief critical examination of some integrative theories of art, that stem from surprisingly divergent sources: functionalists, George Mead, and Jean Duvignaud. There is however a view of art as communication that is considerably more limited than any so far discussed, i.e. the notion that the artist, even if making no attempt to communicate with others, is endeavouring to communicate an experience to himself. For instance, in the context of fiction, if the author is unconcerned with convincing others, e.g. of the realism of a particular dialogue, he will nonetheless still have to convince himself. This conception is expressed most cogently again by Raymond Williams, this time in a work ('Communications') written after 'The Long Revolution', from which our earlier quotations were taken:

> 'Many artists and scientists share this fundamental unconcern about the ways in which their work will be received. ... It is to themselves, in a way, that they first show their conceptions, play their music, present their arguments. Not only as a way of getting these clear, in the process of almost endless testing that active composition involves. But also, whether consciously or not, as a way of putting the experience into a communicable form. If one mind has grasped it, even if only the mind that also created it, then it may be open to other minds.'
>
> (1968: 112-3)

It is not clear here whether Williams is still claiming that, even unconsciously, the artist necessarily aims at communication with others, but what is particularly valuable in Williams' statement is the view of the artist being his own audience and thus making sure that the work of art at least communicates something to himself. It is this minimal assumption of the theory of art as communication that is an essential foundation for the sociology of art, insofar as this latter aims to include within its purview the meanings of the work of art for its

creator.[1] It is this minimal hypothesis that justifies our seeing artistic creation as a social act, since the means by which the artist communicates with himself cannot be totally individual: they will include the conventional meanings of his social environment, or at least of a province thereof. As Williams points out, the communication system is not something that lies outside of the artist, and which he makes use of if he wishes to communicate: it is 'in fact part of himself', and when an artist creates he uses this system in communicating with himself (1968: 112) This point of view will obviously find favour with symbolic interactionists, who emphasize the social character of mind as internalised social discourse. The artist must thus be seen as a social being:

> 'That is, even if he has no formal training, and even if he is totally unaware of the artistic or literary tradition in which he stands, one would expect to find in his work expressions derived from, or related to, his social-existential situation. (Wolff, 1975: 6, my emphasis)

This statement by Janet Wolff leads us on to the examination of an important corollary of the theory of art as communication: the conception of art as expressing meaning.

(iii) The Literary Act as Expression

If art is to communicate meaning, then it must express it, at least for the artist. The conjunction of communication and expression is particularly clear in the work of Collingwood. Collingwood defines art in the following way:

> 'By creating for ourselves an imaginary experience or activity, we express our emotions; and this is what we call art.' (1958: 151)

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1 This is not recognised as an aim by all sociologists of art - see for instance Silbermann,1968. Note also that the 'meanings of the work of art for its creator' does not imply that the creator is always aware of these meanings: there may for instance be many non-conscious background assumptions in a literary work, assumptions that are essential to the overall comprehension of the work and yet which are unrecognized by the author.

Art is the expression of emotion, and there appears to be an equation of consciousness and expression, in that until a person has expressed an emotion he does not yet know what it is (1958: 109-110); hence by expressing it he becomes conscious of it and thus communicates it to himself. Aesthetic expression is furthermore linked to speech:

> 'The aesthetic activity is the activity of speaking. Speech is speech only so far as it is both spoken and heard. A man may, no doubt, speak to himself and be his own hearer; but what he says to himself is in principle capable of being said to any one sharing his language.' (1958: 317)

This is extraordinarily similar to the passage by Williams (1968: 112-3) quoted above (p.202) What is peculiar to Collingwood's approach is that artistic expression may not necessarily involve 'objective' expression; i.e. it may remain in the realm of subjective imagination:

> ' ... a work of art may be completely created when it has been created as a thing whose only place is in the artist's mind.' (1958: 130)

This may well be the case for some forms of literature and music, but seems less likely to apply to sculpture, for instance. Such a view underemphasises the part that the medium plays in the creation of the work of art. Collingwood thus solves the problem of the relationship between the work of art and the consciousness of the artist by equating the two: firstly through postulating the existence of the work of art in the imagination, and secondly by denying that consciousness may precede expression, and thus that the work of art may express a prior consciousness. This latter argument can be upheld only if one accepts Collingwood's conception of art as expressing <u>emotions</u>: to see art as expressing attitudes, values etc. would give birth to the problem, avoided by Collingwood, of the relationship between the prior attitude and the aesthetically expressed attitude.

Despite avoiding certain key problems in the sociology of art, the work of Collingwood is nonetheless vital for its recognition of

the relationship between communication and expression, and indeed for its emphasis upon the alteration of mental phenomena that is incurred by expressing them:

> 'There is emotion before we express it. But as we express it, we confer upon it a different kind of emotional colouring; in one way, therefore, expression creates what it expresses, for exactly this emotion, colouring and all, only exists so far as it is expressed.' (1958: 152) (my emphasis)

Frequently, however, one finds in the sociology of art a naive expression theory that ignores the influence of expression upon that which is expressed. Looking at the work of art from the point of view of explanation, it is considered to express the consciousness of an age or a society; and from the other direction, using art to interpret social consciousness, the work of art is treated as a document. Of what then may art be seen as a document - of which groups and of what consciousness? Swingewood claims that the most popular sociological approach to literature is the documentary one that argues that literature provides a mirror to the age (1972: 13); but he advocates great care with this 'conception of the mirror':

> 'Above all else, of course, it ignores the writer himself, his awareness and intention.' (1972: 15)

This is a valid point, and furthermore Swingewood would not want to see the literary work as a mere reflection of the writer's consciousness.

It may be true that to understand most works of art it is necessary to see them in the context of their wider enveloping culture: Bourdieu for instance advocates the 'iconological interpretation' of Panofsky, according to which:

> ' ... the iconographical meanings and methods of composition are treated as 'cultural symbols', as expressions of the culture of an age, a nation or a class ...' (1968: 592-3)

But the validity of this approach will depend on the extent to which the meanings and forms of the work of art are seen as mere expressions

of a wider culture, ignoring the possibility that a style may be part of an ongoing and partially autonomous tradition. One may of course avoid the problem of demonstrating the relationship of art and social conditions by imposing upon both a single set of categories, thus proving by fiat that art is the mirror of society, or vice versa. This would seem to be the method argued by Kenneth Burke, who suggests that sociological classification should -

> '... derive its relevance from the fact that it should apply both to works of art and to social situations outside of art.' (1973: 137)

- which ignores the fact that such classification may introduce unwarranted assumptions into the descriptions of both the works of art and the social situations.

To focus our critique of the naive expression theory of art, it is necessary to point to the potential creativity and relative autonomy of art. Artistic works may be treated as documents of the consciousness of more or less specific groups in space and time (i.e. from particular individuals to whole eras), and of more or less specific spheres of consciousness (e.g. from particular aesthetic attitudes to overarching world views). The conception of art as expressing the world views of broad social groups ignores, as stressed in the Swingewood quotation above, the artist himself: it fails to take account of his potential isolation and above all of his creative aesthetic exploration - unless his creativity is deemed, as in Goldmann,[1] to be effective principally in furthering the already existent tendency of the consciousness of a social class; or, more radically, is thought to be effective in crystallising an entire culture. Duvignaud is rightly critical of such a view:

[1] See Chapter 11, Section (ii) below.

> 'It is equally debatable whether an individual can deal with an entire era: to think that a great artist crystallises in himself the widespread problem of his time and that he embodies in his work an entire civilisation is to accept a romantic image which does not correspond to reality.' (1972: 40)

It is in this context that Duvignaud criticises Lukács' study of Goethe for making the latter into 'the representative of everything his era contained'. This kind of interpretation is avoided by Duvignaud through his conception of the artist as an 'atypical individual'. (1972: 55 & 60ff) In general Duvignaud is concerned to reject any simplistic conception of art reflecting reality: he would agree with Raymond Williams that the reality which the artist expresses is already interpreted, already formed (Williams, 1965: 35-36); and he goes beyond this to state that reality as described by the artist has been 'twice transformed - once by society and again by the artist'. (Duvignaud, 1972: 29) A similar point is made by Zéraffa concerning the novelist, whose works, he considers,-

> ' ... are both aesthetic analyses and syntheses of a reality which the novelist had already analysed and synthesised before he started to write.' (1973: 37)

The sociologist, he suggests, should study the novel in terms of two levels of expression:

> ' ... the one the thinking behind the book, the other what is written in it ...' (1973: 37)

These statements of Duvignaud and Zéraffa emphasise the creativity of the artist's work: the notion that art is not merely the expression of pre-existent meanings but,as with Collingwood, the <u>discovery</u> of meanings <u>through</u> expression. It is this conception which forms the foundation of Cassirer's work on the philosophy of culture:

> '(Man) cannot live his life without expressing his life. The various modes of this expression constitute a new sphere. They have a life of their own ...' (1970: 247)

Here the emphasis is not just upon the <u>new</u> sphere, but upon the <u>'life of their own'</u>. Art may thus be a relatively autonomous 'universe of

discourse', whose meanings are confined to a limited 'social context of significance',[1] rather than expressing wider social consciousness. The possibility of relative compartmentalisation[2] should therefore be allowed; and Williams overstates the case when he claims that art -

> ' ... comes to us as part of our actual growth, not entering a 'special area' of the mind, but acting on and interacting with our whole personal and social organisation. (1965: 50)

The extent to which artistic expression is related to everyday consciousness is variable; and the ability to recognise this, the ability to compartmentalise and enter into relatively autonomous aesthetic spheres, is clearly a prerequisite for the comprehension of those artistic works that are distant from the present everyday life. Without such a recognition, without mastery of the various social codes required for the artistic works available, the uninitiated are in danger of applying -

> ' ... to an unknown and foreign universe the available schemes of interpretation, that is to say those which enable the familiar universe to be apprehended as having meaning, ... those which organise their day-to-day perception and guide their practical judgement.' (Bourdieu, 1968:594)

As soon as one admits that art may be a relatively autonomous sphere, one has to allow that the expression of meanings in art will alter the meanings through their being expressed in the available artistic forms. This is the perspective that governs Chapter 10, in which we shall explore the special nature of the literary form and its implications for the literary expression of consciousness.

In the review of the naive expression theory of art, no distinction was made between intentional expression (closely related to the theory of art as communication) and 'documentary' expression (related to the view of art as a document). This is the distinction that is made by Mannheim between 'expressive' and 'documentary' meaning[3]: in the latter

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1 See above, Chapter 7, pp 152-153

2 cf the discussion of the compartmentalisation of literary roles, Chapter 8 above, p 188

3 See above Chapter 3, p 68 ff

a cultural objectification points to a global outlook beyond itself. Williams similarly writes of 'documentary culture' and the particular importance of the arts of a period, which can, albeit unintentionally, gives us a sense of the 'structure of feeling' of that period. (1965: 64-65) Bourdieu's emphasis upon iconological interpretation may be seen in the same perspective: in terms of Barthes' terminology,[1] what is signified in the work of art is seen as a signifier of the wider culture. At first sight these views of art as documentary expression seem to be far removed from the theory of art as communication; yet the two perspectives are seen to be related if communication is agreed to depend as much on non-conscious as on conscious-intentional expressions of meaning: artistic comprehension does not depend solely upon the recognition of the consciously intended meanings of the artist, for even this recognition may be based upon the taken-for-granted assumptions that the audience shares with the artist. The critiques of the naive communication and expression theories of art have been designed to show that the artist and the audience do not necessarily share a common world view, and that where assumptions are shared these are not necessarily related to wider social consciousness. Nevertheless, where the artist does aim to communicate he will not be expressing his meanings in a vacuum, but rather in a specific social context that will influence his expression. It is thus vital to acknowledge the significance not only of the form of literary expression but also of its context: the former we shall examine in Chapter 10, the latter in the section that now follows:

(iv) The Social Context of Literary Expression

In the conclusion to Chapter 8 it was mentioned that the present chapter would take up the point that the literary act is peculiar in that it expresses or develops consciousness in the act itself.

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1 See Barthes, 1973: 112ff.

So far in this chapter we have been concerned to examine the ways in which literary action may be seen as the communication or expression of consciousness: yet are we indeed able to argue that the expression of consciousness is the special quality of literary (or artistic, or intellectual) action rather than action in general?[1] Surely any action may be seen as expressing consciousness, and not just intentionally but also in a 'documentary' sense? Even a 'style of life' may be seen as the expression of a world view, as Jaspers notes (1922: 44), and the expression here cannot be taken to be wholly intentional or unintentional. Thus although there <u>are</u> special factors in literary expression, the fact that it expresses consciousness is not one of them. We shall therefore find that much of our argument concerning literary expression applies more generally to diverse forms of social action: literary action may thus be seen to be distinguished from other types of action by degree rather than by kind, though the differences do arise partly from literature's particular <u>kind</u> of expression of consciousness, an expression that being verbal and prolonged has a peculiar visibility. Literary expression will, as we have seen, involve varying degrees of <u>development</u> of consciousness, rather than mere reiteration; there is a certain minimal degree of intentionality in the writing and publication of a literary work; and the writer will <u>tend</u> to be particularly concerned with communication, with the problem of being understood by an audience with whom he may have no direct contact, and thus with the preconceptions that the various audience groups, to which he might address himself, will bring to the literary situation. It is those factors, the social context of literary expression, that we are particularly concerned with in this section.

[1] See above, Chapter 2, p 65, where we write of consciousness being involved in action in the form of <u>expression in</u> or motivation towards action.

An emphasis upon the social context of literature teaches one above all to beware of taking a literary work as a straightforward document of the world view of its author. As Orwell points out, a writer's literary personality may have little to do with his private character. (1965: 81)

One pervasive element in the social context of literary creation consists of the aesthetic attitudes that predominate in the society and period concerned. (See for example Duvignaud, 1972: 65ff) These attitudes may include definitions as to what will count as literature, what are thought to be its functions, and thus how its forms and content are to be evaluated. The writer who wishes to be published and, further, to be positively evaluated, will certainly take account in his work of one or other of the aesthetic attitudes that predominate in his society.

It is indeed chiefly through taking account[1] of those who make up his potential audience that the author is exposed to their influence, though with some of his audience the author may have more direct face-to-face contact or closer identification than 'taking account' suggests. But 'taking account' is of particular importance in authorship in a sense that was not mentioned in Chapter 7,[2] i.e. taking account of others not only in one's cooperative or competitive action plans or in one's life style, but rather in terms of acknowledging their views and expectations so that one's expressions will not offend them or indeed may be positively appraised by them. The writer is thus likely not just to take account of his readers' general attitudes towards literature, but of their wider, non-literary attitudes, and of their definitions and

[1] This is a central element in the "special nature of the contact involved in the author role" mentioned in Chapter 8, p 179 above.

[2] See above, Chapter 7, pp 156-157

expectations of him in particular. This latter point is made by Bourdieu: 'publication' means 'being made public' and establishes a public meaning of the writer's works of which he has to take account in his future literary creation. (1971:166)

The extent to which the writer will be influenced by the various groups that make up his audience will of course be related to the salience which these groups have for his goals, as mentioned in Chapter 8.[1] In so far as he is influenced, it may be through selection of certain aspects of his world view for public expression. Just as a form of selection is involved in the cognitive mapping that is part of an attitude, so is selection involved in the public expression of attitudes: the sociology of expression is indeed an important adjunct of the sociology of knowledge. If encouraged by the social context, one of the author's attitudes may be extended to become the formative principle for a whole literary work:[2] extension is thus a process that may occur not merely on the level of unexpressed consciousness.

Selection may be made not only from the world view of the author, but from that of his chosen audience too, especially if the latter is a 'rag-bag' world view as suggested in Chapter 7:[3] i.e. even if the author wishes to create a work that will be completely acceptable to his audience, he may be able to select, from their inconsistent world view, perspectives which are congruent with his own. There may indeed be a process of mutual elective affinity between his world view and the world views of his role-contacts.[4]

Few would deny that selection of some sort is necessarily a part of literary creation: Collingwood however is a rare exception -

1 See above, Chapter 8, p 193

2 The way in which attitudes may act as 'formative principles' in literature is discussed in Chapter 10, p 232ff below.

3 See above, Chapter 7, p 153

4 cf Chapter 7, p 172 above.

> 'People sometimes talk as if 'selection' were an essential part of every artist's work. This is a mistake. In art proper there is no such thing; the artist draws what he sees, expresses what he feels, makes a clean breast of his experience, concealing nothing and altering nothing.' (1958: 56)

Later in the same book, however, Collingwood at least allows that the artist may select which emotions he is to express:

> 'The artist may take his audience's limitations into account when composing his work; in which case they will appear to him not as limitations on the extent to which his work will prove comprehensible, but as conditions determining the subject-matter or meaning of the work itself. ... he takes it as his business not to express his own private emotions ... but the emotions he shares with his audience.' (1958: 312)

Admittedly Collingwood claims this to be the case only for the artist who identifies with his audience and 'collaborates' with it: but then he claims that such collaboration is the norm for the artist who wishes to publish his work; and he has a highly optimistic view of the selection that is its consequence:

> 'The audience is perpetually present to him as a factor in his artistic labour; not as an anti-aesthetic factor, corrupting the sincerity of his work by considerations of reputation and reward, but as an aesthetic factor, defining what the problem is which as an artist he is trying to solve - which emotions he is to express - and what constitutes a solution of it. The audience which the artist thus feels as collaborating with himself may be a large one or a small one, but it is never absent.' (1958: 315)

While Collingwood is doubtless right to suggest the tendency of the artist to have an audience continually in his mind during the process of artistic creation, he exaggerates in several respects: in particular in underrating the extent to which the artist may see his audience as a limiting factor; and the extent to which unaesthetic considerations of reputation and reward may influence his work. Selection in accordance with audience expectations will not appear aesthetically desirable to every artist; and the problem is not solved by labelling 'impure' those who do not conform to Collingwood's norms.

Considerations of audience perspectives may however lead beyond mere selection from one's own world view. Not all the assumptions of a literary universe are explicitly spelled out; the writer may be aware of which assumptions he can leave as such, and which he has to explicate for his audience. Depending on the audience, he will feel a greater or lesser need to convince of the realism of a described course of events, to persuade of its morality,[1] of even to justify its portrayal. We may therefore find him pronouncing legitimations that he would not find necessary within his world view outside this public context. Public expression may thus occasion the development of consciousness through ideal pragmatism.[2]

Just as the world view of his audience may influence the writer, so may its cognitive structure[3] - and not merely in the sense that if the world view is an inconsistent 'rag-bag' he will have greater freedom of choice in his expression. The cognitive structure of the literary role-set may lead to a cognitive style[4] apparent in the literary work: for example, if the cognitive structure appears to show consistency, this may lead to a confident, assured and intimate cognitive style in the work, or perhaps a defiant style if the perspectives are alien to the author; if the audience's cognitions appear to lack differentiation and articulation, the cognitive style of the work may be cautious; if the cognitive structure reveals divergent expectations, the style of work may be moralistic, with the author

1 For instance, the characters involved may require elaborate vocabularies of motive that are acceptable to the readers.

2 See above, Chapter 3, p 78

3 Assuming that he is aware of this cognitive structure - see above Chapter 8, p 189

4 The concept of 'expressive style' would be more accurate here: see below, Chapter 10, p 236

supplying a multitude of legitimations. These are merely more or less plausible hypotheses, but they indicate that the author may be influenced by the structure of the cognitions of his audience as well as by the cognitions themselves.

A passage from the work of Bourdieu suggests a way in which the cognitive style of the author in his work may be influenced by the social definition of his work:

> 'Even the author most indifferent to the lure of success and the least disposed to make concessions to the demands of the public is surely obliged to take account of the social truth of his work as it is reported back to him by the public, the critics or analysts, and to redefine his creative project in relation to this truth. When he is faced with this objective definition, is he not encouraged to rethink his intentions and make them explicit, and are they not therefore in danger of being altered?' (1971: 168)

Yet it is not just his intentions that may be altered; for, beyond clarifying them for himself, he may wish to make them explicit in his work, thus altering the cognitive style of his literary expression. On the other hand Bourdieu does not underrate the extent to which the social definition of a writer's work may fixate his creative project, particularly in the case of the successful author:

> 'It might be possible for creative artists to be more vulnerable to success than to failure, and indeed they have been known to fail to conquer their own success, and to subordinate themselves to the pressures imposed by the social definition of a work of art which has received the consecration of success.' (1971: 167)

The successful writer thus has a public that is identified with him, that is 'his', and to which his work is acceptable, as long as he produces the kind of work with which he is now identified. The writer will thus tend to become involved in a gradual process of commitment[1] to the literary form and content that has granted him success, and indeed to his literary identity and his public. Insofar as this

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[1] See above, Chapter 2, p. 33

commitment is confirmed by repeated success, subsequent alteration of creative project becomes increasingly unlikely.

This kind of commitment implies at least some degree of sincerity in the writer's literary expression, a belief in what he writes. Yet we must not ignore the possibility of the author writing principally for ulterior motives, seeing his literary expression in purely utilitarian terms, as suggested in Chapter 8.[1] In Chapter 2, in connection with Pareto's concept of derivations, we emphasised that utility does not operate in a vacuum:

> 'the principle of utility works within a context, such as the audience for the derivation, the differential 'availability' of various derivations to the actor, and the generally accepted modes of expression/rationalisation.'[2]

Yet in subsequent chapters we have concentrated upon the utility for the actor of the intrinsic meaning of the beliefs that he adopts. In Chapter 7, for instance, we tended to see the individual selecting, from those legitimations that are available, those that will merely satisfy himself:[3] as soon as we consider public expression, acceptability to others becomes relevant. Thus, whilst not ignoring factors of availability, we have perhaps previously underemphasised the element of public acceptability in the beliefs the actor adopts; and of course although we have dealt with utilitarian developments of consciousness, such as 'promotions'[4], not until Chapter 8 have we introduced utilitarian expressions, i.e. expressions whose intrinsic meaning is irrelevant for the actor and thus whose utility for him lies wholly in the extent to which they produce rewards from those who receive them. The element of connotation may here be crucial; e.g.

1 See above Chapter 8, pp 179-180

2 See above, Chapter 2, p 30

3 See above, Chapter 7, p 172

4 See above, Chapter 3, p 80

certain expressions may act to signify[1] one's character. In the sphere of art, Albrecht notes Parsons' point that a set of artistic standards may become a symbol of belonging to a subcultural group. (Albrecht, 1970: 13) Literary expression may indeed be undertaken more for rhetorical reasons - to demonstrate the ability to use literary language; to connote a particular literary style[2] - than for the communication of intrinsic meaning: it may be just a 'form of words'.[3] Expressions which are totally utilitarian in this sense are perhaps exceptional; but utility is a central aspect of most expressions, even where the actor is sincere in the consciousness expressed. As often said, one may be able to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, but one can never tell the whole truth: the aim of this section has been to indicate that what is expressed is at the least selected - at the most fabricated - and thus communication can never be just 'for its own sake'.

(v) Conclusion

In this chapter we have attempted to clear a way through the predominant conceptions of the literary act as communication and expression, in order to reject unnecessary presuppositions and yet to retain those points of view that are of value for the sociological interpretation of literature. We have thereby concentrated upon the social nature of literary creation even where the author communicates only with himself;

1 For examples of connotative significations see the work of Roland Barthes.

2 See Barthes, 1964: 193.

3 This is reminiscent of a possible interpretation of 'vocabularies of motive'. These latter are seen in Chapter 3 (p 80 ) as pre-action legitimations which the actor sincerely adopts; but they may also be legitimations that, whether pre- or post-action, are merely vocabularies, forms of words that, apparently like some literary expressions, may be far from the actor's 'real' consciousness: i.e., insincerely uttered; expressions to be made on appropriate occasions.

upon any attempts he does make to communicate with others; upon expression, both intentional and 'documentary', as an essential part of communication; and upon the potential creativity and relative autonomy of literary expression. Finally, in examining public literary expression (or 'literary publication'), we envisaged the author taking account of the aesthetic attitudes predominant in his society; of the world view and cognitive structure of his audience; and of the social definition of his work, involving a gradual process of commitment on the part of the successful author. These influences were seen to involve the writer in various degrees of selection and fabrication, including the development of explications, letigimations, vocabularies of motive and cognitive styles in the literary text; and, in the extreme case, the promulgation of utilitarian expressions with purely rhetorical function. We thereby established, in particular, the importance of seeing the literary act in its social context; and, in general, the relevance of the sociology of expression as an adjunct of the sociology of knowledge.

## CHAPTER 10: THE LITERARY FORM

### (i) Introduction

Having examined in the last chapter the social influences upon the public expression of literary meaning, we concentrate in this chapter upon the formal aspects of literary expression, that is upon those aspects of literary form that either affect or are intimately connected with the expression of meaning in literature. These formal aspects cannot be ignored in any adequate account of the sociological interpretation and explanation of literary world views.

We begin with an examination of the relationship between literary meanings and literary symbols; continue with an examination of concepts of wider structural form and of style in literature; then explore the importance of taking into account the forms that are available for the author to use in his work; and conclude with an analysis of the nature of fiction and the relevance of this nature for the sociological interpretation of literary meaning.

### (ii) The Expression of Content in Form: Meaning in Symbols

When one speaks of the 'content' of an artistic work, one is usually referring to the meanings that the work conveys, or (which is not the same thing) that the author intends to convey. The 'form' in which the artist conveys this meaning is sometimes taken to refer to the 'materials' that he uses for artistic expression, whether these materials be, for instance, types of stone, the sound of certain musical instruments, or written words. Sins of omission and, in particular, of commission are inherent in the very nature of the artist's materials[1], so that these will of necessity alter the actual expression of that which was intended to be expressed.

[1] See Levin, 1973: 64.

This modification of the theory of art as expression is however not enough for some. Bouwsma is more radically critical of attempts to see art as expressing meaning: he finds the analogy with language deceptive, and in particular questions whether one can 'translate' the meaning of a work of art:-

> 'The meaning of sentences is translatable, but the 'meaning' of poems, of music, is not ... It makes sense to ask, What does the sentence express? It expresses a meaning, of course, and you may have some way of showing what this is, without using the sentence to do so. But now it makes no sense to ask, What does the poem express? or What does the music express? We may say, if we like, that both are expressive, but we must beware of the analogy with language. And we may prevent the helpless searching in this case, by insisting that they 'express' nothing, nothing at all.'
> (Bouwsma, 1961: 164)

Bouwsma would however agree that just because a work of art is untranslatable it does not mean that it cannot express in the sense of 'evoke':-

> 'Now then, do poems and music and pictures evoke emotions as sentences evoke images? I think that they frequently do.' (1961: 161)

A work of art, then, may be untranslatable, in the sense that there may be no other combination of symbols that will evoke the same response in us, but it may nonetheless evoke. However one may argue, against Bouwsma, that it may be impossible in many cases to find an exact translation <u>of a sentence</u> into alternative available symbols. Thus the 'analogy with language' may not be so inappropriate after all, as long as one does not assume, <u>as indeed one should not assume even with verbal language</u>, exact translatability, or indeed common interpretation of symbols.

One may however take Bouwsma's argument further than he himself does, and consider whether the reason that some artistic symbols may be unlike verbal language is that in artistic 'expression' the

perception[1] of the symbol may be such an important part of the meaningful experience that it constitutes the fundamental barrier to translation: an alternative symbolic form would thus fail to convey the same meaning or at least the artistic experience could not be translated into a very different form, e.g. a different expressive mode. For instance, transposition into another musical key might lose little meaning, but translation from the musical to the linguistic-conceptual would entail considerable alteration of experience.

Bourdieu seems to be making a similar point in his discussion of the codes intrinsic to works of art: original works cannot be reduced to the prevailing cultural codes, for they -

> ' ... carry with them the very categories of their own perception ...'
>
> (1968: 600)

One can neither translate these works, nor formulate the rules for their comprehension:-

> 'The repeated perception of works of a certain style encourages the unconscious interiorization of the rules which govern the production of these works. Like rules of grammar, these rules are not apprehended as such, and are still less explicitly formulated and formulatable: ... As is seen from the facts of the case of the musical work, the most exact and best informed discursive translations cannot take the place of the execution, as a hic et nunc realization of the individual form, which is irreducible to any formula:'
>
> (1968: 601-2)

With Bourdieu though, as with Bouwsma, the untranslatability of a work of art appears to derive from the lack of alternative available symbols that will give one just this particular experience: there appears to be no recognition that a further reason for untranslatability derives

[1] Whether actual or imaged.

from the significance in certain art forms of the very perception of the symbol as part of the artistic experience. Here the meaning cannot be abstracted from the experience of the symbol: it is symbol-bound. This does not mean that the symbol in itself (i.e. apart from an interpretative context) is anything but a meaningless objectivity. Thus symbol and concept/experience should not be confused, as Bouwsma seems to do in seeing sadness in the music (1961: 166-7). The experience appears to be in the work of art because the former is either inherently or contingently dependent on the latter for actualisation. Similarly the perception of the work of art and its interpretation may appear to be synonymous, whereas in fact the reason for the perception of the artistic symbols not preceding their interpretation may be that the perception is guided by the interpretation.

If the above use of the term 'symbol' implies a theory of art as symbolic, then Stevenson (1965) would dissent, at least as far as the non-representational arts are concerned. He would agree that art may be expressive and evocative, but would deny that it is necessarily symbolic, in the sense of standing for a concept or experience. It seems however that Stevenson is working with a restrictive conception of symbolism, in which the symbol is supposed to be arbitrary, and thus merely to stand for an experience without being part of that experience. If then, as suggested above, the perception of the symbol becomes a necessary part of the aesthetic experience, then the symbol is no longer merely symbolic - yet it does not follow that it is not symbolic at all. The question then becomes not so much, Are the arts symbolic? as, Are there symbolic elements in the arts? In symbolism (unlike mere association, for instance) there must be some element of detracting from the intrinsic or prior meaning (if any) of the symbol so that it may be used as a form to evoke meaning beyond itself, just as in Barthes'

myths the original sign becomes emptied of meaning so as to be used as a form to symbolise a concept. But in myths it is only the cynic who is aware of such a purely symbolic relationship: the innocent reader of myths focuses upon the mythical symbol as an 'inextricable whole made of meaning and form'. (1973: 128) Barthes uses this as an argument that myths are not symbolic; we should use a parallel argument to indicate that artistic symbols are not always purely symbolic, in that perception of the symbol may constitute part of the experience, so that, in Barthes' terms, the appreciated work of art (or element thereof) is a 'sign' which is the 'associative total' of the signifier (the symbol whose perception is an intrinsic part of the aesthetic experience) and the signified (the concept or experience evoked by the symbol). (1973: 122-3)

We may note at this point an interesting distinction between symbolism and evocation: in symbolism the signifier is capable of being retained in mind without detracting from the meaning of the signified (as would happen with many mere associations), and thus can stand for whilst standing with the signified. If the 'signifier' cannot be thus retained, the case may be merely one of association or evocation. Although symbolism necessarily evokes, evocation is not necessarily symbolic: the memory of mother may evoke the memory of father without the former symbolising the latter.

The above argument clearly gives an affirmative answer to our question: Are there symbolic elements in the arts? - and we should not wish to restrict the recognition of such elements to the representational arts. Arnheim points out that even 'abstract' art -

> '... is not 'pure form', because even the simplest line expresses visible meaning and is therefore symbolic. It does not offer intellectual abstractions, because there is nothing more concrete than colour, shape, and motion.'
>
> (1961: 207)

The idea of 'visible meaning' rather than 'intellectual abstractions' conveys well the significance of the percpetion of the symbol as part of the experience, and of the consequent difficulty of 'translation' into linguistic concepts. The extent to which the perception of artistic symbols constitutes a significant part of the aesthetic experience will, however, vary between different art forms. A word, written or spoken, and a series of musical notes maybe equally symbolic; but the perception of the visual or aural form of the word will, unlike the music, not always be an intrinsic element in its aesthetic appreciation. Especially where non-poetic, we are more likely to find or create substitute symbols for words than for music. This does not however mean that exact translation into already existent alternative symbols is always possible: one must often make do with approximation. In referring to words as symbols, we must of course remember that the symbol is a physical artifact that stands for the concept, rather than the word being a concept that symbolises something else (e.g. 'the thing itself').

The possibility of a substitute symbol for a concept does not imply that one can have concepts without at least imaged symbols: it may be that these are necessary to organise 'reality' into formed subjective meaning. Thus there are three levels of potential dependency of experience upon symbolic form: the experience may be capable of occurring without symbols; or symbols may be necessary for the experience to be evoked (e.g. because no other combination of materials can be found that will evoke the same experience, give the same associations etc.); or it may be that the actual perception of symbols is an important part of the experience, so that it is more than just a case of evocation.

Although symbol and experience may be more intrinsically related than is suggested by the notions of expression in or evocation by a work

of art, this does not mean that one cannot attempt to express a prior experience in a work of art, or that the work may not evoke a subsequent similar experience: it merely denies that the whole 'expression' can be reduced to the prior or subsequent experience, since it is experience 'in form'; i.e., translation into another form, or removal of symbolic form altogether, would alter the nature of the experience, as the perception of the symbol is part of the experience. Where exact translation is in another sense equally impossible, i.e. where the evocation of an experience requires a particular set of symbols and their associations, then similarly one could hardly come to this experience before expression in symbolic form. Here perhaps an evocation theory of art, as one might call it, is thus stronger than a simple expression theory. This point would be supported by Cassirer, who sees art as a process of discovery rather than merely as expression or imitation. (1970: 158) Cassirer emphasises the formal elements of art, the medium of expression, not just as technical means of communicating a prior experience, but as part of the formation of the aesthetic experience itself:-

> 'Art is indeed expressive, but it cannot be expressive without being formative. And this formative process is carried out in a certain sensuous medium ... for a great painter, a great musician, or a great poet, the colours, the lines, rhythms, and words are not merely a part of his technical apparatus; they are necessary moments of the productive process itself.'
>
> (1970: 156-7)

> 'The context of a poem cannot be separated from its form - from the verse, the melody, the rhythm. These formal elements are not merely external or technical means to reproduce a given intuition; they are part and parcel of the artistic intuition itself.'
>
> (1970: 172)

Williams makes a similar point in his account of art in terms of describing an experience which one only fully discovers through its description:

> 'There can be no separation, in this view, between 'content' and 'form', because finding the form is literally finding the content - this is what is meant by the activity we have called 'describing'.'
> (1965: 42)

This of course introduces the possibility that art may attempt to express an experience already described in another form, e.g. linguistic form. Yet wherever art attempts to express a prior experience, we may find a double forming process as described by Zéraffa: both the work of art and the thinking behind it possess shape and form. (1973: 37)[1] The prior concept or experience, already 'in form' in the sense of not being formless undifferentiated reality, is thus re-formed in art; so that the prior concept/experience and the artistically re-formed concept/experience cannot be equated, though may be related, e.g. through analogy.

If the only possible translation from particular artistic symbols into another set of symbols is approximate, analogous translation - in other words if, one is unable to capture precisely the same experience in other symbols - one may nonetheless through such approximate translation still construct useful types (e.g. of style) that have a certain degree of general applicability, e.g. to the forms of several arts. It may be noted that even relatively specific stylistic concepts (e.g. applying to the work of a single artist) are constructs, abstracting aspects of the work for special attention, and emphasising stylistic effects and meanings through a process of approximate translation. This latter process is indeed inevitably involved in art criticism, which explicates aspects of a work of art in rational non-aesthetic terms. Yet is is not just the art critic whose work of explication involves translation: translation is

[1] Other relevant points made by Cassirer, Williams and Zéraffa are discussed in Chapter 9, pp206-7 above, in the context of the inquiry into the creativity of artistic expression.

also inherent in any attempt at the sociological interpretation of human behaviour. Geertz argues likewise with respect to ethnography:

> 'Doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of 'construct as reading of') a manuscript ... written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behaviour.'
>
> (1975: 10)

Similarly in Chapter 7 we have contended that non-logical action must be translated in terms of sociological rationality.[1] The problems of sociological 'translation', then, are not confined to the sphere of the arts.

The arguments that we have put forward in this section have profound implications for theories of art, particularly where these emphasise communication or expression.[2] Firstly, it is immediately apparent that, since symbol and experience are not to be confused, we cannot assume identity of interpretation, and thus the theory of art as evocation (associated with the reception aspect of the theory of art as communication) must be modified to allow divergent meanings at the receiver end of communication. Secondly, the theory of art as expression (which is associated with art as communication at the producer end) must be revised to allow for a relationship of some dependency between symbol and experience, so that the experience one wishes to express is altered by the very expression thereof. The theory of art as communication is not however without use[3]: its value lies in its emphasis on <u>intention</u> to express (for self or others) or receive meaning; and indeed unless artistic symbols are treated <u>as</u> symbols (i.e. as expressing meaning for

[1] See above, Chapter 7, p 161

[2] See above, Chapter 9, for a discussion of some of these theories.

[3] A similar point is made in Chapter 9, p198 above.

at least some creator or observer) then they are not art, nor indeed symbols. Furthermore, where the artist is attempting symbolic expression in art,[1] his satisfaction with the attempt is likely to depend upon at least his reception (from the work of art) of an experience that approximates in some way the original experience he wished to express, though modified and developed in interaction with the symbolic expression. Both expression and reception, and to this extent some form of communication, are therefore elements of artistic production.

So far we have considered a particular version of the problem of the relationship between form and content, i.e. the relationship between symbol and meaning, and a particular solution offered by Bouwsma, i.e. the unity of symbol and meaning, a point of view we have both elaborated and criticised. But these matters do not exhaust the problem of form and content in the interpretation of the arts: for this it is necessary to consider a wider concept of form than that of 'symbolic form'.

### (iii) Meaningful Content and Wider Form

Bourdieu, following Panofsky, argues strongly against viewing the themes and sensible qualities of a work of art out of context. The broadest level of context is supplied by 'iconology', in which the themes and their formal and technical arrangements are seen in terms of the fundamental principles that guide their selection and composition:

> 'Thus, it is only starting from an iconological interpretation that the formal arrangements and technical methods and, through them, the formal and expressive qualities, assume their full meaning ...'
>
> (1968: 593)

[1] Of course not all artists are concerned with the expression of a prior experience: one must remember the possibility of a 'trial and error' approach to art.

The 'fundamental principles' are taken ultimately to derive from the culture of a group or epoch, an assumption which cannot be uncritically supported. Bourdieu has however made a valuable contribution in his emphasis upon principles of selection and composition. These principles are often conventions within which the artist works, and Bourdieu points out that even 'realism' is subject to such conventions: he suggests that realism involves an unconscious agreement between artist and public as to what is real and how it should be represented, so that an 'objective' representation owes its objectivity more to conformity with social rules as to what constitutes objectivity, than to concordance with 'reality'. (1968: 591)

Within the sociology of literature, Burns and Burns pursue a similar argument to that of Bourdieu, and focus upon the concept of 'composition' which they choose in preference to style or form. Composition, in their sense of the term, is found most readily in novels and plays, as it relates to the 'sense of an ending' that Kermode stresses in literature:

> 'Composition has to do with the principles of selection and construction which govern the individually created fictive worlds of writers - principles by which they describe or designate physical settings, situations, actors and actions, and by which these are ordered into sequences which move towards an ending. The ending constitutes ... a closure which renders all that we have seen and heard comprehensible and meaningful.'
> (Burns and Burns, 1973: 21)

The ordered sequences are connected by (not necessarily rational) causal paths. The emphasis upon sequence, closure, and moving towards an ending, makes it clear that Burns and Burns' concept of 'composition' is applicable to a limited type of literature, which may generally be described as 'plot literature', in which 'What happens next?' and 'What happens in the end?' are of paramount concern. Nevertheless, if we focus upon their more general statements, it is clear that they share

Bourdieu's valuable consideration of the principles of selection and composition in works of art: the emphasis is upon the selection and organisation of subject-matter, rather than isolated fragments of subject-matter.

The regard for organisation in literature is shared by Goldmann, who, with Lukács, claims to make a radical break with those sociologies that are more concerned with the content than the general form of literary works:

> '... Lukács sought out the interconnection between creation and social consciousness not in the contents but in the categories which structure one or other of them, ... The same categories ... may govern worlds with completely different contents, ...'
> (Goldmann, 1973: 120)

The 'significant categorial structures' that Goldmann finds in literature are thought to correspond to those that may be discovered in the 'mental structures' of a certain social group: there is a correspondence of organisation - they share a common 'organising principle'. (Williams, 1971: 12-13) Williams makes it clear that, in the work of Lukács and Goldmann, he strongly approves of this emphasis on forms: he finds particularly valuable the analysis of literary forms -

> '... where changes of viewpoint, changes of known and knowable relationships, changes of possible and actual resolutions, could be directly demonstrated, as forms of literary organisation, ...'
> (Williams, 1971: 15)

Literary form for Williams, then, seems to be equated with literary organisation and, from the list in the above quotation, appears to indicate rather a concern with general content than a dismissal of content considerations. Indeed it would be futile to attempt to distinguish sharply between literary form (in the sense of formative principles) and general content, since both influence, and are manifested through, the selection and composition of more specific content.

Despite Williams' admiration for Lukács and Goldmann, he does complain that they too readily equate form and genre:

> '... form, in Lukács and Goldmann, translates too often as genre or as kind; ... we stay, too often, within a received academic and ultimately idealist tradition in which 'epic' and 'drama', 'novel' and 'tragedy', have inherent and permanent properties, from which the analysis begins and to which selected examples are related.'
> (Williams, 1971: 15)

A contrast to the idealist conception of genre is provided by Zéraffa, who defines genre as: 'a form of art subject to the framework of a particular set of rules' (1973: 40) - or at least this is non-idealist if the rules are recognised to be historically specific and mutable. Genre seems to combine aspects of form and medium (e.g. naturalistic painting, the epic poem, television drama - though even these categories are too broad and may well include several alternative genres), and generally to imply a greater degree of institutionalisation than form per se.

To return to the concept of form, the reason for this and similar concepts being given such emphasis in the sociology of literature is their supposed value in revealing social perspectives outside of the literary context. All the writers so far mentioned in this section make some such claim for the significance of literary form. Zéraffa, looking at the problem from the other direction, shows how a social perspective can lead to a literary form. He discussed the work of Don Passos: the frame of reference for the writing of 'Manhattan Transfer' was provided by the formation of a perception of Manhattan itself. Zéraffa here argues that, '... through its formal character ... a work of art exposes reality.' (1973: 38) In this condensed statement, 'formal character' would seem to refer to the formative principles of selection and composition discussed above in the work of Bourdieu and Burns and

Burns; and the 'reality' exposed would be more fully described as the already formed reality of a perspective on reality, i.e. the frame of reference that is the guiding principle behind the construction of the work.

The idea of a frame of reference as the formative principle of a literary work indicates once more the difficulty of making a simple and clear-cut distinction between form and content. Wellek and Warren recognise this difficulty in their theory of literature (1963: 140-141): they find that 'content', adequately conceived, is formed rather than formless; and that 'form' may apply both to the formation of content, and to the linguistic elements (symbols in our terminology) that convey the content. They thus opt for an alternative distintion between aesthetically indifferent elements: 'materials' - and the organisation of these materials for aesthetic purposes: 'structure'. The materials include both 'form' (in the sense of symbols) and 'content' (in the sense of unorganised subject-matter). These distinctions bear a marked similarity to those that we have developed above, i.e. symbols, meanings and form. We choose 'form' in preference to 'structure', as it implies less a description of general structural qualities like coherence, and seems more readily to include the formative principles that lie behind the structure.

The concept of literary 'structure' however raises questions concerning the relationship between concepts of structure or form discussed in the context of literature, and those concepts of consciousness discussed in Chapter 6. What is the relationship, for instance, between literary form and cognitive structure (or attitudes, or cognitive styles)? We have, after all, already noted how a frame of reference can be a formative principle for a literary work: this would seem to imply a close

relationship between a general attitude and a literary form. A cognitive style would seem at first sight to be less likely to function as a major formative principle: it may however be found that a certain author's chief characteristic is his illustration of a particular cognitive style, either through the style of his own expression (a point taken up below in the discussion of 'expressive style'[1]), or through the portrayal of cognitive styles in his characters.[2] Similarly a general attitude may be conveyed by the literary work as a whole, or the author may choose to portray a variety of attitudes in his characters: the latter selection, however, may lead to the conveying of the former general attitude. As for cognitive structure, this would seem to have a parallel in the more abstract structural characteristics of the work, such as consistency, differentiation, or, at a less general level, temporal organisation and narrative complexity. Clearly as the structural characteristics become more specific, so they are more difficult to differentiate from points of view in the literary work: a particular narrative structure may be used to convey aspects of a general social perspective, or may be used for a purpose not directly related to attitude communication, e.g. convincing an audience of the realistic character of a description. This latter point leads us to recall the many points made in Chapters 8 and 9 concerning the inadequacies of a naive expression theory of art, particularly where a work of art is seen as a document of the world view of the artist. Thus although a general attitude may function as a formative principle for a literary work, we must not assume this attitude to pertain to particular persons or to general non-literary spheres of social life. The formative principles

1 See below, pp. 236-237

2 Patrick White's 'The Vivisector' may be an example of a novel of this type, whose formative principle is the portrayal of a cognitive style (an extreme form of analytical cynicism), both through the work as a whole, and in particular through the thoughts of the hero Hurtle Duffield.

may for instance be predominantly utilitarian or aesthetic. The author may choose to portray attitudes and cognitive styles that will appeal to his audience; or his aesthetic aims may lead him to discover forms of literary organisation, rather than merely using them as means of expression. In all this, however, one must not assume that the author is fully aware of the formative principles behind his work: the 'form' of the novel cannot be simply taken as an intentional 'message', for the communication of which the content is arranged. Not all literature is pure allegory recognised and intended by the author. The 'form' of a literary work is a construct for the purpose of explicating the principles of selection and composition therein.

In this section we have explored various conceptions of form and content, stressing the importance of seeing them in relation to, rather than divorced from, one another. In short, meaningful content is either already formed before being expressed in a literary work (for which it may constitute a principle of selection and composition), or is discovered through literary formation. 'Form' in the sense of symbols is adequately understood only in the wider interpretive context of literary formative principles; and 'form' in the sense of the general mode and principles of organisation of the work is equally dependent upon meaning, as Wolff points out:

> 'In the case of literature, the interdependence of content and reference with artistic form is particularly clear; patterns of words are inseparable from their associations for any reader who understands the language, and the perfection in, say, the structure of a plot is totally dependent on the meaning of the events described ... (the) assumption that appreciation of form is easily detachable from content, meaning and association is probably wrong.'
>
> (1975: 13-14)

Finally it may be noted that the form of a work of literature may develop through the extension of certain aspects of content so that they become

the formative principles for the whole work: this may occur through the restriction of alternative themes that might otherwise have been developed.[1] On the other hand, a form once developed may restrict the themes that an author can include within that form, especially if the author places a premium on factors of consistency and unity: here we may find a consistent general content permitting and restricting the more specific content.

(iv) Style

So far in this chapter we have avoided tackling the problem of style, except in the sense of a cognitive style expressed in a literary work. Yet style must be recognised (along with form and content) as one of the most frequently employed concepts in literary interpretation. Indeed any thorough analysis of meaningful content must take account of style: Schapiro indicates that, if we go beyond a narrow conception of content as subject-matter, then both subject-matter and style may be seen to express the more general 'content' of broad attitudes and perspectives. (1961: 105) Schapiro refers to one conception of style as a means of communication of diffuse connotations (1961: 104) and it is this conception that appears to be the most useful for our purposes. There is indeed an obvious connection here with the work of Barthes. Barthes sees the subject-matter of a literary text as its manifest message, i.e. what its language denotes; this content-expressed-in-language however also connotes a second message on a plane which encompasses the first plane of content: this is the 'connotative' message, and may constitute a literary style, such as 'affection'. (Barthes, 1964: 192-3). Thus

[1] The extension process here is similar to that described in Chapter 7, concerning the extension of perspectives through a lack of alternative available points of view. See above, Chapter 7, p 158

literary style can be seen as a second-order communication of meaning: a second-level usage of language.[1] Both Barthes, following Guiraud (Barthes, 1964: 195), and Wellek and Warren (1963: 24) suggest that such stylistic connotations are particularly likely to arise where there are deviations from normal linguistic usage, such as deviant associations of words.

Style is thus a most important concept in expression, as it refers to a certain means for the communication of meaning; it is thus distinct from cognitive style, which is more concerned with the manner in which an actor holds certain cognitions and evaluations.[2] Literary style is an often intentional medium of expression, whilst cognitive style is found in the formal properties of unexpressed consciousness. There is however an important stylistic concept which shares properties of both literary and cognitive styles whilst being synonymous with neither: '<u>expressive style</u>' is not normally an intentional communication medium, yet it is concerned with the formal properties of <u>expressed</u> consciousness. The expressive style is the cognitive style of the author's literary expression[3]: it is not just a cognitive style, a manner of holding cognitions and evaluations, but rather refers to the way these are held <u>publicly</u> (e.g. in the public context of literary expression). The expressive style is of course connoted for the interpreter by the manner in which the literary content is expressed: like literary style, therefore, it may be taken as a second-order communication of meaning; but it is clearly much more specific than literary style, which can convey a much greater variety of meanings (such as the diffuse emotions and associations

1 The 'secondary' level does not necessarily imply a <u>subsidiary</u> status.

2 See above, Chapter 6, p 140

3 This was first mentioned in Chapter 9 (p 214 above), where several plausible hypotheses were put forward concerning the influence of the cognitive structure of an audience upon the expressive style of a literary work.

that Schapiro suggests may be communicated by style - 1961: 104), and the expressive style of a work is less likely to be recognised by an author and to have been used consciously as a medium of communication.[1] The concept of expressive style once more illustrates the importance of acknowledging the sociology of expression as a vital adjunct of the sociology of knowledge.

Meaningful themes in literature and styles of literary presentation are clearly not themselves disparate fragments which the literary form brings together into a unity: both themes and styles already possess form. Literary form thus has various levels of generality (though our usage of the term concentrates upon the more general formative principles of the work); and so themes and styles could be considered particular kinds of less broadly compassing form that are worth differentiating in certain types of art. Where art is representational, there is a language of representation whose manner of usage may connote further diffuse meanings, and thus constitute a style. In non-representational art there is no obvious distinction between a principle and secondary usage of an aesthetic language: all the symbols in these arts could be said to be stylistically conveying content. Nettl has attempted to distinguish between styles and themes in music (see Nettl, 1964: Chapter 6), but his description of themes would appear to refer either to objective sequences of musical symbols (in which case the style of their presentation constitutes the means by which they can communicate meaning); or to individual musical 'ideas' (which would be difficult to distinguish from the diffuse connotations of style in our terminology: Nettl's concept of style would then seem closer to our notion of general form or the structure of the work). It is thus difficult to envisage non-stylistic meaningful themes

[1] The style that Barthes described as 'affection' would be an expressive style in our terminology; whereas, e.g. Schapiro's discussion of 'gothic' styles would refer rather to aesthetic/literary styles.

in music (outside of programme music). In literature it is likely to be easier to distinguish between themes and styles. Remembering our discussion of 'translation' above[1], literary themes are likely to be more readily and adequately translated into rational non-aesthetic terminology than literary styles, the latter presenting problems of translation similar to those posed by music.

We have already noted that themes and styles may be seen as particular kinds of form within the general form of the literary work: but can a style itself act as a work's formative principle? Style may indeed be a major axis of composition, in the sense that the work is designed chiefly for the appreciation of certain stylistic connotations: these connotations perhaps together with the perception of the symbols through which they are conveyed[2], may thus constitute a formative principle for the work. But we must not assume that a discovered homogeneity of style necessarily means that the style was an aesthetic organising principle: the style may be merely homogeneous, a common technique rather than an intentional source of aesthetic unity. This point is made by Schapiro (1961: 88), who also regrets the unquestioning search for homogeneity of style within art works: we may find several styles within the same work. Similarly we cannot assume consistency between stylistic and thematic elements:

> '... the content of a work of art often belongs to another region of experience than the one in which both the period style and the dominant mode of thinking have been formed; an example is the secular art of a period in which religious ideas and rituals are primary, and, conversely, the religious art of a secularised culture.'
>
> (Schapiro, 1961: 106)

1 See above, p 224 ff

2 This is of particular relevance in poetic style.

Finally we must re-emphasise that style should not be taken as a simple expression of world view. It may be an extension, at one time meaningfully associated with a particular subject-matter, but then generalised to a common usage:

> 'A style that arises in connection with a particular content often becomes an accepted mode governing all representations of the period.'
> (Schapiro, 1961: 105)

It may thus become a tradition, an accepted communication form rather than a form for communication. As such it is a mere technique or rhetoric, a craft that may be developed by artists to demonstrate their skill. Artistic communication, however, depends very largely on acceptable forms, whether general, stylistic or thematic; and these forms are not always meaningless rhetoric that must be adopted for one's work to be favourably received, for, at the opposite extreme, they may delineate the concerns with which the artist must become involved if he is to achieve successful aesthetic communication in his own time. We shall thus now explore the question of the forms that are available to the writer, and the manner in which these restrict and permit, mould and induce his expression.

### (v) Available Forms

In the creation of a work of art, the artist has to work with those symbols that are the inherent or conventional technical apparatus of his medium: he has to use the symbols that are available to him, though he may be able to modify and add to these. But the broader concepts of form and content, which we have explored since section (ii) of this chapter, will also confront the artist as conventions with which he must come to terms: he will have at his disposal a limited set of themes, styles and general formative principles for his work. At the broadest

level he may be working within a highly institutionalised genre, encased in a rigid framework of rules. In the sociology of literature, Burns and Burns suggest that there is a 'conventional and conceptual meta-fictive apparatus' with which the author must comply if he is to achieve adequate communication. The sharing of this apparatus by writer and reader involves a common acknowledgement of -

> '... a universe of fictive worlds, with a grammar of conventions, rules of the game, and conceptual vocabulary of its own ...'
>
> (Burns and Burns, 1973: 22)

The kinds of conventions that this list would appear to include are the types of action and outcome that are portrayed, the structural and stylistic patterns employed, the literary devices that may be used, and even the vocabularies of motive that are thought to be suitable for the characters. As Bourdieu suggests, these conventions may be 'tacitly assumed rather than explicitly postulated': part of the 'cultural unconscious' of a social group or period. (1971: 180)

The symbolic, thematic, stylistic and structural forms that are available to an author may act both as restrictions upon his expression and as sources of insight. We have already noted that a literary form, in the sense of a consistent general content, may limit the development of potential themes in a work.[1] Similarly the form of the work may counteract the values of the writer, as Swingewood suggests is the case with Balzac's realism (1972: 87); or it may belie his philosophy, as, according to Kermode, is apparent in Sartre's 'La Nausée': here it is the novel as genre that is denying the validity of what the writer attempts to express therein:

[1] See above, p 235

> '... although it is a novel, it reflects a philosophy it must, in so far as it possesses novel form, belie.'
> (1973: 220)[1]

The conflict between the author's desire to express and the forms of expression available to him may however take the form of a simple incompatability between the forms that he has a particular ability and inclination to use, and the forms that are traditionally available to him and that promise greater economic viability. Orwell, for instance, sees Dickens as a caricaturist who is yet committed to plot:

> '(he) was constantly setting into action characters who ought to have been purely static ... (who) are finally involved in 'plots' where they are out of place and where they behave quite incredibly.'
> (1965: 133)

We may thus see Dickens as being best able to engage in caricature, but as having to set his work within the predominant framework of plot literature, a framework encouraged by serialised publication. On the other hand, available artistic forms may suggest new perspectives to an author. New forms that are developed within the sphere of another art may provide an impetus for the generation of fresh forms and perspectives in literature. An obvious instance of this is the influence of film upon the novel: Zeraffa, for example, points out that Don Passos used ideas about film montage in the composition of 'Manhattan Transfer'. (1973: 38) More generally one may argue, with Kroeber (1970: 123), that the experiences that are available for artists in existent works of art are the springboard for their own attempts at expression: they start from available forms, which they at first imitate and then develop,

[1] On the other hand, one must beware of holding an over-restrictive conception of the novel form: those who have a fixed idea of a particular genre may be unable to recognise developments of that genre. Virginia Woolf, for instance, was much castigated for being 'unable' to portray characters in her novels: yet her rejection of characters as a mode of organisation in the novel deliberately reflects her rejection of characters as a mode of organisation in our knowledge of the world. This is made explicit in such works as 'Jacob's Room' and 'The Waves'.

rather than starting with their own individual experience, which they then compromise through the use of aesthetic conventions. Clearly both of these ideal-typical images of the artist must be born in mind, as neither can be assumed universally to prevail. It is significant, however, that Kroeber is predominantly concerned with the visual arts: the representation of reality in painterly symbols, for instance, is more likely to be confined within a realm of formal artistic training, than the verbal representation of reality, a representation that is moreover not limited to the literary. The writer is thus more likely than the painter to feel a conflict between his already formed reality perspective (assuming that he wishes to give literary expression thereto) and the forms that he finds available.

We must equally avoid both the view that the forms in a literary work derive simply from that which the author wishes to express therein, and the view that tradition determines unambiguously what the writer is able to express. The development of literature is more adequately seen as the continual modification of tradition, with the retention of some elements whilst others are undergoing revolution. This is the point of view expounded by Curtius, and approved by Burns and Burns (1973: 22); and it reinforces the emphasis placed in Chapter 4 upon a structural and historical perspective[1], and in Chapter 7 upon the modifications of superstructure over time.[2]

Even where a fixed and narrow tradition encompasses literary expression, we must not assume that continuity of the literary forms implies continuity of their function, and thus of their meaning.[3] Where

1 See above, Chapter 4, pp 94-95, in the context of our discussion of Mannheim.

2 See above, Chapter 7, pp 171-172

3 'As the function is changed so is the meaning' - see above, Chapter 4, p 95 in relation to Mannheim.

a wider selection of alternative forms is available[1], there may be a process of mutual elective affinity between the world view of the author and the available literary forms.[2] Where no neat affinity can be found, the author, if aiming at aesthetic unity, will attempt to rationalise (in the sense of making consistent) the meanings he intends to express and the forms he must use to express them: in the process both meanings and forms are likely to undergo alteration. The new forms that may thus develop are likely to require legitimations to be put forward on their behalf, especially if the expectations of traditional critics have salience for the author.

Finally in this section we may note the suggestion by Burns and Burns (1973: 321) that the work of an individual author may itself constitute a tradition. Yet this must not be taken to mean that we should merely see the writer's work in the context of his work as a whole; but rather in the social context of the expectations and evaluations made of him by others.[3] He may be faced with the problem of following a particularly successful work, of perhaps maintaining the originality of his work - which may present a dilemma, in that the forms that he has made available for himself through his originality may not be used again without relinquishing some of their originality: this may not worry him if he follows his own newly constituted tradition.

Finally in this chapter we shall explore some of the attributes that pertain less to tradition or convention, but rather are inherent in the very nature of written fiction.

1 Barthes would say: where there is a higher 'degree of freedom' of the 'rhetorical code' - 1964: 196.

2 Cf Chapter 7, p172 where the world view of the individual is seen as developing through mutual elective affinity with existent world views.

3 Cf the discussion of Bourdieu's ideas on the social definition of the writer's work, in Chapter 9, p215 above.

(vi) The Nature of Written Fiction

There are two major approaches to describing the nature of fiction, viz. in terms of literary language and in terms of literary truth and belief. The first approach is favoured by Barthes, who considers that the rhetoric of literature makes it literary and thus gives to a verbal communication the status of a work of art:

> '... in addition to the element of story-making which it shares with other artefacts, literature is possessed of an element which gives it specificity: its language.'
> (1964: 191)

This language in traditional literature is embedded in a myth in which 'literary discourse' is the signification: the discourse signifies the concept of literature. (1973: 134) The emphasis on literary language leads Barthes to see -

> '... a literary work or text as a message which puts the emphasis on itself ... it is the message itself, its pattern, the physical presentation of its signs which are stressed ...'
> (1964: 194)

The expressive, connotative and denotative functions of literature are thus seen as less significant - a view that contrasts with that of Fügen, who stresses the very story-telling aspects of literature that Barthes passes by. In Barthes' terms, Fügen emphasises the reception of literary communication, and in particular the special kind of belief associated with this reception. Fügen claims that there is a characteristic reality-claim involved in literary communication: 'ein eigentümlicher Wirklichkeitsanspruch'. (1968: 21) To appreciate a literary work in literary manner one must adopt an attitude appropriate to literary reality: i.e., neither simply belief nor quite disbelief, but rather suspension of disbelief. One may argue that this attitude is found in relative degrees: in some forms of literature greater disbelief may be

encouraged; in other forms the aim may be a much stronger degree of emotional involvement, at the expense of aesthetic distance. Nevertheless, Fügen's characterisation of the literary attitude is widely applicable, particularly to the literature of the realist tradition. In such works, as we shall see, the devices that are used to encourage the suspension of disbelief are particularly worthy of investigation. It is within this realm, of the techniques that are used to encourage the literary attitude, that one can see a link between the work of Barthes and Fügen: the very use of literary language may aid the reader's transition into the fictional universe in which suspension of disbelief is the appropriate attitude.

Duvignaud tends to concentrate upon the creation rather than the reception of art, thus revealing another angle on the nature of fiction. Duvignaud stresses that creativity and imagination occur not only in artistic action: wider social action also possesses these qualities (1972: 21). In the context of literature, he would argue that fiction is not such a special case, as one may see in the formation of fictional and actual social universes the creation of a world according to values. Such a point of view would, however, ignore the essential differences between societal and artistic creation: to a certain degree the writer can create on his own a fictional universe; and, because it is fictional, the consequences of living therein do not have to be faced. Duvignaud's emphasis upon the creativity of art is however helpful:

> 'In reality, every artistic experience of the creation of forms is - to use an image from card-playing - a 'new deal' which, while undoubtedly making use of essential elements from the 'human landscape' inhabited by the artist (whether this landscape is in his mind or actual), suggests a new arrangement and a redistribution of the established system.' (1972: 42)

We should therefore not see literature as merely a representation of an existing order: the presentation of a 'new deal' is a highly signifi-

cant attribute of literary creation, and leads us to recognise the importance of values in literature. The fact that literature can portray a re-arrangement of the world means that the fictional world can conform more closely to values.[1] The search for values as formative principles of literary works thus becomes established as a major task for the sociological interpretation of literature, as long as we do not forget the strictures placed upon such an investigation by the elements of literary autonomy that we have previously discussed. The question of the attribution of the values discovered in a literary work cannot however be solved a priori. Both this question, and the broader one of values in literature, will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Although literature does not claim, according to Fügen and Duvignaud, to portray an empirical world, nonetheless if some form of realism is its aim, if it hopes to convince of the authenticity of its universe, to the extent of the suspension of disbelief, it may have to resort to various literary devices, the use of which indeed reveals a claim to realism. An example of this is first-person narrative, which may grant greater authenticity, but is likely to create problems for the author wishing to impart crucial information through his first-person narrator. Thus Levin points out that Proust's realism from the standpoint of the first-person necessitates the convention of eavesdropping (Levin, 1973: 65-66). In 'Wuthering Heights' we find a great complexity of first-person narrative: narrative within narrative within narrative ; and this very complexity, and the careful use of literary devices to sustain it, reveal the strength of Emily Brontë's efforts to claim realism.

[1] This 'conformity to values' does not imply the portrayal of a positive utopia, but rather of a fictional universe which, in comparison with a non-fictional world view, is likely to be more purely related to values, whether in a positive or negative manner.

Irrespective of problems of realism, the literary work as a work of art will confront specifically aesthetic problems,[1] especially if some notion of aesthetic unity is paramount. These problems may once again lead to the use of literary devices, e.g. to establish plot unity in a novel. Purely literary devices become increasingly difficult to distinguish here from what one might call the ideological devices that may be used in literature: thus unexpected developments in a plot may modify the otherwise inevitable course of events described. In this context, Williams points to the use of 'magical' devices to postpone the conflict between ethic and experience (Williams, 1965: 82).

Many of the problems that the author encounters thus appear to stem from a felt need for consistency in his work. This need may of course derive from a high valuation of aesthetic unity; but it may equally derive from a factor still more intrinsic to written fiction, i.e. the nature of fiction as a public, written statement. Consistency is clearly likely to be a greater concern where a literary work threatens to occasion the public revelation of contradictory views through their juxtaposition in inspectable written form. The general structure of the literary work will therefore tend towards greater consistency than the cognitive structure of either author or audience. Kern, following Mannheim, suggests that -

> '... an attitude may not be worked out because the contradictions within it would become apparent ...'
> (1942: 510)

What we are proposing here, however, is that 'literature may force, through the conscious construction that it involves, the working out of attitudes, unless the author is able to resort to the kinds of

[1] Schapiro makes this point in his discussion of Riegl: Schapiro, 1961: 101

magical device to which Williams draws attention. If he is unable or unwilling to make use of such devices, literature as a public written statement will expose the contradictions of the elaborated attitudes therein, unless the author is able to develop, through ideal pragmatism,[1] higher level integrative legitimations. Such will be the course of action of an ideal-typical consistency-oriented writer; not all writers will be so aware of inconsistency (despite the tendency of literature to reveal it) or be so loathe to admit to it.

We have seen the kind of influence that literature as a public written statement will have upon the general form of the literary work: to complete this analysis we must ask what will be the effect upon the specific themes and expressive style of the work. In so far as consistency is encouraged by the very nature of published written fiction, a consistent general content will restrict the themes that the author can develop in his work: this was already point out on p 235 above. With respect to expressive style, literature as a public written statement, deliberately conceived, will tend to encourage in the writer a greater awareness of his own attitudes and assumptions, which may in turn influence his expressive style, e.g. in the direction of over-anxious self-legitimation, complacent ominiscience, or pedantic exactitude.

(vii) Conclusion

In this chapter we have investigated those concepts that have been used, and those that should be used, in the analysis of the expression of meaning in literary form. We have examined the implications of these concepts for a theory of literary expression, and thus indicated those aspects of literature as a form of expression that must be taken into

[1] See above, Chapter 3, p 78

account in any attempt to explicate the meaning 'expressed' therein. The literary elements that were thought noteworthy of distinction were seen in relationships of mutual influence with one another, as was the case for the elements of consciousness that we outlined in Chapter 6.

In particular, we examined the following: the relationship between symbols and meanings in various forms of art, the potential inherent or contingent dependence of meaning upon actualisation of symbols, the consequent problem of translation, and the implications thereof for the theory of art as communication in both its expressive and evocative aspects; the relationship between meaningful content and wider formative principles in literature, between this wider literary form and concepts of consciousness form, and between literary form and themes; the concepts of literary style and expressive style, and the relationship between styles and themes, and styles and forms; the forms available to the author - symbolic, thematic, stylistic and structural - and the possibility of conflict between intended expression and available forms; and finally the nature of written fiction, with respect to the reality created and the language used to create it, the importance of values and literary and ideological devices in its creation, and the influence (e.g. upon the use of these devices and the encouragement of consistency) of literature's characteristic public inspectable form and of an emphasis upon aesthetic unity.

## CHAPTER 11: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE

### (i) Introduction

In this chapter we are concerned with issues in the sociology of literature that may broadly be called methodological. The focus is upon how a sociologist interprets literature, but less in terms of the theoretical implications of certain sociological models and concepts, than in terms of three problem areas: (a) the general aims of the sociology of literature, e.g. levels of generality and types of generality attempted; (b) the methodology implicit or explicit in sociological attempts to interpret literature, e.g. the place of values in literary interpretation; and (c) particular methods for the sociological interpretation of literature, e.g. the sorts of question that one may direct at a literary work. Most of the issues that fall within the first two of the above problem areas, and that we shall discuss in later sections of this chapter, are raised by the work of Lucien Goldmann, which at present constitutes the single major attempt at a general sociology of literature.[1] It is thus with an examination of Goldmann's work that we shall commence.

### (ii) Lucien Goldmann's Sociology of Literature

In Chapter 2, Section (iv), an account was presented of Goldmann's sociology of knowledge. This is clearly essential as a background to his sociology of literature, particularly with respect to his views on

[1] Williams in particular avows the importance of Goldmann's work for the sociology of literature, claiming that 'Goldmann's concepts of structure, and his distinctions of kinds of consciousness' are significant advances, and that, whilst often based upon Lukács, they are nonetheless developed beyond his work. (Williams, 1971: 11)

the relation between world view and social class: world view remains a central concept in his sociology of literature, and is again related to group consciousness in a way that neglects individuality, in this case of the author. We begin with Goldmann's conception of the writer and the literary work, as this has implications for the macro- versus micro-analysis of literary processes, and for the interpretation of literature with reference to values.

Goldmann's conception of the writer differs radically from Mannheim's notion of the present, relatively autonomous intelligentsia. (Mannheim, 1936: 139) For Goldmann, great writers and philosophers are the exceptional few -

> '... who either actually achieve or who come very near to achieving a completely integrated and coherent view of what they and the social class to which they belong are trying to do. ... (They) express this vision on an imaginative or conceptual plane ..., and the more closely their work expresses this vision in its complete and integrated form, the more important does it become. They then achieve the maximum possible awareness of the social group whose nature they are expressing.' (1964: 17)

This view is reminiscent of one of Mannheim's statements which is not consistent with his notion of the 'free-floating intelligentsia':

> 'Even when a seemingly isolated individual gives form to the utopia of his group, in the final analysis this can rightly be attributed to the group to whose collective impulse his achievement conformed.' (1936: 186)

Goldmann similarly writes of the 'collective aspirations' of a group finding expression in the imaginative creation of a fictional world. (1973: 122) Yet Goldmann's work also contains contradictions, and in other places he is less dogmatic on the relation between the writer and his social environment:

> '... it is obvious that the freedom of the thinker and writer differs greatly from that of other persons; their ties with the life of society are diversely complex and mediatized in different ways; the internal logic of their work is autonomous in different ways, to a much greater extent than any abstract and mechanistic sociology has ever been willing to admit ...'
> (1969: 59)

Nevertheless, Goldmann is unable in practice to allow for these diversely complex ties. His very criteria of greatness for literary works implies coherence, consistency, and the extreme expression of the world view of a social class:

> 'Great philosphical and artistic works represent the coherent and adequate expressions of ... world-views ... their content being determined by the maximum potential consciousness of the group, of the social class in general ...' (1969: 129)

The manner in which Goldmann writes of the consciousness of a group implies some kind of inner dynamic which results, at its height, in great works of art:

> '... any great literary or artistic work is the expression of a world view. This vision is the product of a collective group consciousness which reaches its highest expression in the mind of a poet or thinker.'
> (1964: 19)

As might be expected from our discussion in Chapter 2,[1] the world view expressed by the writer is that of a social class, at least in so far as we are dealing with a 'valid literary work' (1964: 99). The implicit logic behind this claim runs as follows: (a) any valid literary work takes in the whole of human life; (b) the consciousness of only those groups, whose world views take in the whole of social life, will find expression in such works; (c) since the seventeenth century (or since antiquity - 1969: 102) only social classes constitute such groups.

[1] See above, Chapter 2, p 51 ff

Goldmann's notion of aesthetic value, which is the foundation for his statements about great works of literature, is taken over from Lukács, and refers to the solution of the contradiction between multiplicity and unity. On the one hand the writer should create -

> '... a rich and multiple universe of individual characters and particular situations ...'
> (1967: 515);

and on the other hand the value of aesthetic unity should impel organisation of the diverse elements into a coherent whole. Both aspects of aesthetic value are entirely consistent with Goldmann's notion of all great literary works expressing a world view. Goldmann's particular emphasis upon 'unity' also makes his use of structuralist methods for the analysis of literature completely valid, each great work by definition possessing a coherent structure with very few heterogeneous elements. It is important here to enquire whether it is possible to eradicate values from the study of literature in a way that Goldmann fails to do. The only way in which this could be accomplished would be by failing to select which literary works to study, except according to random methods. Yet, even if this were done, the very process of historical selection, by means of which works of the past become known to us, implies selection according to values: one either has to select according to one's own values, or else rely upon those that have governed which literary works of the past have survived till the present day; and the former selection process can in any case take place only within the field already selected by the latter.[1] Goldmann is in fact quite justified in selecting the works he will study according to an aesthetic value, as long as the actual analysis of the works thus selected is not distorted by his valuations,[2]

[1] For an account of why Charlotte and Emily Brontë were selected for our case studies in the sociology of literature, see pp 287-290, below.

[2] Values are, however, necessarily involved in literary interpretation: see below, p 274 ff

and as long as he does not attempt scientifically to validate his criteria of literary greatness. What Goldmann seems to claim, however, is that his method of selection and historical selection are practically one and the same: the criterion of greatness by means of which works are 'selected' by history is that of the coherent expression of a world view (1967: 503), and this is also the principle that guides Goldmann in his selection.

The most important criticisms to be raised at this point, then, are that Goldmann overemphasises the degree of coherence in what are regarded (generally, and also by him) as great works of the past; that historical selection is not always according to Goldmann's value-criteria; and that, even if we were to agree with Goldmann that all great literary works are the expression of a world view, then it does not necessarily follow (unless forced to do so by definition[1]) that the world view concerned represents the maximum potential consciousness of a class or even of a group.

Turning now more directly to Goldmann's methodology for the sociology of literature, four stages of analysis can be seen to emerge from a comparison of his various writings on the subject, in particular 'The Hidden God' (1964) and 'The Sociology of Literature: Status and Problems of Method' (1967).

1. Starting from the text, Goldmann sees the elements thereof as being fully understood only if incorporated into a wider structure. A model is thus created which includes all the text, nothing more and nothing less. (1967: 496) This can be done, of course, only if the text itself possesses some kind of coherence. (1964: 12) The actual process of

[1] See above, Chapter 2, p 51ff for an examination of Goldmann's circularity of argument on this issue.

creating the model is dialectical,[1] in that one looks at the text, thinks of a suitable model, and adjusts this model as one reads the text more closely, deeply and thoroughly, which then enables one to understand more of the text. (1967: 505 & 513) The model thus created is termed the 'universe of the work', which in fact is the world view expressed by the work (1967: 445 & 514) (or works: if we cannot justify its autonomy, the work must be considered with others by the same author - 1967: 503). The structure must account for the majority of elements in the text, this being one of the two criteria for adequacy of comprehension, the other being the improbability that another structure would account for more (1967: 500-501). Goldmann suggests a specific procedure for checking the adequacy of a model: the research worker should compare the model -

> '... with the whole of the work studied, paragraph by paragraph, in the case of a text in prose; line by line, in the case of a poem; speech by speech, in the case of a play ... (and determine): (a) to what extent each unit analysed is incorporated in the overall hypothesis; (b) the list of new elements and new relationships not provided for in the initial model; (c) the frequency, within the work, of the elements and relationships provided for in this model.' (1967: 513)

2. The next step in the analysis is to look around for a world vision which existed at the time and which corresponds to the universe of the work, though the latter may in fact be an extreme exaggeration of the former: in this case the exaggerated former is considered to be the world vision corresponding to the universe of the work. For Pascal and Racine, according to Goldmann, the universe of the work is the tragic vision, and the exaggerated world vision is extreme Jansenism. (1967: 500) The 'correspondence' involved between the universe of the work and the world view is not, according to Goldmann, one of content, but of 'significant categorial structures', i.e. the mental categories which -

[1] Cf Mannheim's dialectical method of 'documentary interpretation' for the construction of a world view from cultural objectifications - see Chapter 3 Section (ii), pp69-71 above.

> '... shape both the empirical consciousness of a certain social group and the imaginary universe created by the writer.' (1967: 495)

It is this fact which enables the sociology of literature, according to Goldmann, to take as its object of study works of great aesthetic value, and not merely those in which the author gives a detailed and unimaginative account of the social life of his time. (1967: 494-5)

These first two stages of the analysis complete the task of interpretation or comprehension, which Goldmann defines as:

> '... the bringing to light of a significant structure immanent in the object studied ...' (1967: 500)

Explanation, which is achieved through what we see as Goldmann's next two stages, is conceived as:

> '... nothing other than the incorporation of this structure, as a constituent element, in an immediately embracing structure, which the research worker does not explore in any detailed manner but only in so far as such exploration is necessary in order to render intelligible the genesis of the work which he is studying.' (1967: 500)

The explanation of the genesis of a text must be both causally and meaningfully adequate:

> '... its validity is to be judged solely and exclusively in accordance with the possibility of establishing at least a rigorous correlation - and as far as possible a significant and functional relationship - between, on the one hand, the development of a vision of the world and the genesis of a text originating from it, and, on the other hand, certain phenomena external to the latter.' (1967: 501)

3. The next stage must thus consist of the explanation of the genesis of the extreme world view (which corresponds to the universe of the work) as the ideally pragmatic[1] response to the intellectual problems posed by the world view in its more moderate or confused form. Goldmann appears

[1] For a discussion of 'ideal pragmatism', see above, Chapter 3 p 78

to underemphasise the need for evidence of some form of communication between the formulators of the extreme world view (in the case of Racine and Pascal, the authors themselves) and those who held the less highly developed world view.

4. The world view which constitutes the explanation of the extreme world view now becomes the subject of a further explanation, in terms of the problems inherent in the economic and social life of a particular social group, for Goldmann a social class, in a particular situation. (1964: 99)

Within Goldmann's account, as outlined above, there is no suggestion that we should look at the world view of the writer concerned, and indeed he stresses the merely marginal importance of biographical details and the author's intentions. (1967: 497) Certain good reasons for Goldmann's standpoint may be indicated here. Firstly, it is often not possible to formulate a world view of the author except from his writings: his own world view must in such cases remain a matter for supposition for which we have no independent evidence.[1] Secondly, the world view expressed in the author's writings cannot be taken as identical to his world view outside the literary sphere.[2] Goldmann implies this in his claim that the aesthetic value of coherence may lead the writer to put forward a world view conflicting with various ideas, values and aspirations that he holds dear.[3] (1967: 497) He also stresses that the function of the

1 Paucity of independent evidence is a problem encountered in the investigation of Emily Brontë's world view. (See below, p 288) Goldmann claims that using the work itself as evidence for the world view of the author produces a 'vicious circle' explanation, in which the work itself is seen to be determined by a paraphrase of the work. (1967: 507) One might however suggest the possibility of some aspects of the author's world view (hypothesised from a study of certain elements of his work) conditioning other elements of his literary universe.

2 This point has been much emphasised in the last three chapters, particularly in relation to the sociology of expression. By itself, however, it does not constitute a valid reason for ignoring the author - his ends, values and relationships.

3 Similar points are made on pp 240 and 247 of Chapter 10 above.

work for the author is distinct from the mental structure governing the work, which constitutes the 'objective significance' of the work, i.e. the perspectives present of which the author is not necessarily aware. (1967: 497)

The fact that the author's world view must be distinguished from that of his literary works, should not however lead us to ignore with Goldmann, the author's orientations and relationships, in so far as we have evidence for these apart from his works. Goldmann's neglect of the author leads all too easily to the kind of 'macro-history' of which Williams accuses him (1971: 15): Williams advocates a 'micro-structural analysis', and, in our view, the author would constitute a significant element of such an analysis. In relation to Goldmann's stages of interpretation and explanation, we should wish to know why it should be this particular author who formulates the extreme world view from its less developed version; why he felt it necessary to develop it; and how he came to communicate with the original world view in the first place. Without such an analysis, we should have no adequate connection between the world view of a social group and the universe of a literary work: the relationship would remain merely plausible.

Goldmann is undoubtedly correct in his claim that the experience of a single individual is insufficient to formulate a world view (1967: 495), but this is only true in the sense that the individual always starts from somewhere, from some kind of world view; and it is equally true to say that the individual may by himself develop it, without us being able to reduce this to the 'collective subject', to the 'collective aspirations' (1967: 494 & 498) of a social group. Yet the only context in which Goldmann considers that a personal study of the author is relevant is that of inconsistencies and variations: the individual details of a world view may be historically and personally specific. (1964: 21) It seems almost as if Goldmann wishes to trace the world view to its class origins,

and explain the deviations from this in terms of the author's psyche. What Goldmann therefore lacks is any conception of a sociological explanation in terms of an individual. Any account that considers the author other than as a group representative must thus be psychological in Goldmann's eyes; for psychology is concerned with individuals, in his view, and sociology with groups, and especially with social classes. Goldmann thus bypasses the author in jumping from the world view of a social class to the literary universe, and therefore fails to provide necessary links in an explanation of the genesis of the literary work.

At this point it is interesting to examine to what extent Goldmann follows his methodological principles in practice. He himself refers mostly to his work on Pascal and Racine, and his methodology often seems simply to be clarifying his procedure in these studies. It may therefore be more informative to look briefly at a study he mentions only in passing: 'Le Théâtre de Genet et Ses Études Sociologiques'. (1966) Here Goldmann takes Genet's plays and constructs for each the universe of the work. He then compares these literary universes, traces their development, and finally turns his attention outside the works themselves to discover parallells in the thought of certain social groups. For the first play, 'Haute Surveillance', the universe of the work is clearly a world view representing an adequate response by an individual to his social position in the 'sous-prolétariat' or Lumpenproletariat. (1966: 98) Here there is no problem of investigating how the author came to be involved with a subproletarian world view, since Genet lived for a great part of his life amongst petty thieves. In delving into the work in greater detail, however, Goldmann finds that many elements of this world view correspond to conceptions, values and morals belonging to what he calls 'bourgeois society', only these values etc. are applied in a different context: that of individuals outside of and condemned by bourgeois society. (1966: 101) Whilst this is interesting and quite convincing,

Goldmann nevertheless fails to analyse why the sub-proletariat in general, or in this specific case (or why Genet himself, if not the whole sub-proletariat), should incorporate in its world view elements generally regarded as being appropriate for the bourgeoisie. The characteristic deficiency in Goldmann's methodology, the failure to go beyond 'correspondence' to an analysis of meaningfully connected causal relationships, thus appears again here. This deficiency is indeed even more apparent in Goldmann's analysis of the four later plays, in which Genet's sub-proletarian world view becomes less and less important as the elements of another world view are progressively adopted. Goldmann gives an excellent account of the development of Genet's thought and how this can be accounted for only in terms of Genet's incorporation of the world view of the left-wing in Western Europe, particularly the intelligentsia of the French Left. (1966: 96 & 115) Yet there is no attempt to discover why Genet should have adopted the vision of this group,[1] and the analysis thus inevitably remains at the level of descriptive correspondence. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the social group of 'left-wing intelligentsia' is not in itself a social class, but merely what Mannheim would call an 'intellectual stratum'. (1952: 186) There is however in Goldmann's work no attempt to trace the social factors influencing the development of this stratum in the way that Mannheim would suggest (for instance through an analysis of class origins and social mobility - Mannheim, 1956: 142-155). Thus Goldmann, who so frequently stresses the importance of class in the analysis of world views, in this instance omits any examination of objective class position and concentrates solely on the conception of the class structure, and thus on the world view itself.

[1] Swingewood asks a similar question in relation to Goldmann's study of Malraux: 'But what precisely was Malraux's relationship with communism and therefore with the working class whose vision he expresses?' (Swingewood, 1972: 76).

Having seen how the flaws in Goldmann's methodology become apparent in practice, it is nevertheless important to stress the utility of the sociological aim of his work. It is this aim, to see the work in its social context, which constitutes the great value of his approach. This accounts for his lack of reductionism to individual psychology, within the framework of which so many literary interpreters work. To look for a 'psychological' explanation of Genet's plays is to miss the point that the individual's psyche is itself largely socially conditioned and functions within a social context, and is to fail to account for changes in the way Genet views the world. An explanation of such changes in terms of the intrinsic development of a perspective is inadequate in that it assumes the necessity of just this course of development, while many other courses were available, and, of course, it fails to supply a reason for the development itself: why did the perspective not remain static? Similarly inadequate is the view that, rather than a literary transposition of historical events as Goldmann suggests is the case with 'Le Balcon' (1966: 11), the work simply traces the logical consequences of a certain type of action within a certain type of situation: this view cannot explain why this specific kind of action is chosen in this particular type of situation, and why this outcome (of the many possible) is chosen for exposition. Goldmann's approach, while incomplete, at least avoids these traps and focuses attention fruitfully within the framework of the social. Goldmann's work is also an attempt to bring together the sociology of knowledge and the sociology of literature[1], and thus shares our aim of providing sociological explanations of meaningful literary expressions.

Indeed Goldmann's methodology, if modified and supplemented in the ways we have suggested above, is of considerable value for the sociology of literature. One of the major modifications that we have suggested is

[1] Kern (1942) shows that Mannheim's work can be utilised in similar manner.

is that the world view that corresponds to the universe of the work must not be assumed to be attributable automatically to a social class. Even if one ignores the author and attempts an explanation in terms of the ultimate group origins of a literary world view,[1] a careful examination must be made of which individuals and groups share the world view, to elucidate the social composition of this 'intellectual stratum'; and then finally the world view may be related to the social existence of the groups concerned. This would be the model of investigation advocated by Mannheim. (1952: 186)

The other suggested modifications of Goldmann's work are particularly relevant to our interest in the relationship between, on the one hand, the universe of a literary work (involving problems of interpretation - modifications B + C) and, on the other hand, the development of the author's thought in relation to his literary and class situation and action (involving consideration of the author - modification A). These modifications, which we shall now proceed to explore further in the subsequent sections of this chapter, may be summarised as follows:

A. Wherever possible, the author should be taken into account in the sociological analysis of literary works. The investigation should not be restricted to correlating the universe of the work with the world view of certain social groups: there must be an examination of the author's relationship to these groups, and of the reasons for his adoption and development of certain elements of the world view concerned. In this analysis we cannot dismiss the study of the author's own world view as irrelevant.

1 Such explanation is not a necessary element of all studies in the sociology of literature: Goldmann's study of Genet, for instance, would be complete at the level of Genet's relationship with the left-wing intelligentsia; Goldmann needs to make a further investigation of this stratum only if he claims that the world view of Genet's plays has class origins.

B. Goldmann's aesthetic values of multiplicity and unity lead him to view great works of literature as providing total and coherent perspectives. Yet the assumption of coherence and 'totality' can make interpretation seem deceptively easy. The inconsistencies and partiality of literary works must be admitted and examined in detail.

C. Goldmann's declared aim is to construct the 'objective meaning' of literary works, implying that only one objective interpretation is possible. We should urge, on the contrary, recognition of the role of the researcher's values in the construction of models of fictional universes.

(iii) Macro- versus Micro-Sociology of Literature

We have noted above[1] Williams' contrast of macro-history and micro-structual analysis. One might argue that Goldmann is undertaking the latter, in that he does concentrate on the works of particular authors; yet his predominant assumption, that the universes of great literary works can be related to broad world views and social classes, limits his capacity for research in terms of particular actors, orientations and relationships. We find this tendency equally in other writers who claim to take the author into account, whilst in effect viewing him merely as the instrument of wider social forces. Abell's attempt to synthesise various approaches to the arts falls into this trap: the only way he can conceive of integrating the study of the author with wider sociological accounts is to see the author as an 'organ of expression' for the 'collective background'. (Abell, 1970: 735) Other theorists dismiss the relevance of subjective aspects of the author for sociological explanation. Barbu admits the significance of subjectivity,

[1] See above, p 258

but only if it is orthodox: the 'personality' of the artist is relevant only in so far as it expresses the dominant culture of the society. (Barbu, 1970: 21) Eve claims that the subjective aspects of an author have only psychological interest. (1975: 67) Wollheim would agree: he considers subjective elements 'psychological', yet, unlike Barbu and Eve, takes this as proof that sociological explanations are inadequate:

> 'Indeed it seems that particular sociological explanations are likely to be acceptable only to the degree to which interpolation of psychological factors between the social conditions and the works of art is easy and natural: that is to say, to the degree to which as explanations they cease to be sociological.'
> (1970: 575)

Wollheim thus appears to equate all meaningful explanation with psychological explanation: clearly he has never encountered the sociology of Max Weber, for example. At this point we shall not attempt to defend the analysis of the author and his subjectivity in the sociology of literature, since we have already indicated our views on this subject in Chapter 8.[1] This argument, however, is part of a broader one concerning the relative merits of the macro-versus micro-sociological approaches to literature. An example of the former approach would be the positing of broad generalisations relating artistic genres to social structural variables; the latter approach, on the other hand, tends to favour a particular case study that takes account of specific actions, orientations and relationships. Both approaches are equally capable of a comparative emphasis. Without actually attempting both of these approaches (the research on the Brontës in Chapter 12 clearly falls within the case study mode of investigation), it would be unwise to reject either;nevertheless, Wilson's critique of broad-scale generalisations seems highly pertinent:

[1] See above, Chapter 8, section (iv), p 189 ff

> '... the attempt to embrace huge historical eras and whole artistic traditions, inevitably leads to a loss of concreteness, to a submerging of the individual artist, the tangible art object, and the veritable social psychological context that are really the crux of attention.' (1973: 2)

The crucial emphasis here is upon the concrete social-psychological context: the mere inclusion of sociopsychological mechanisms is not enough to avoid the loss of concreteness that Wilson laments, as we can see in the work of Kavolis, who includes such mechanisms in his very broad generalisations on the relationship between artistic style and social structure. (1968: Part I) We must thus distinguish between the macro-micro contrast and the question of breadth of generalisation: highly abstract generalisations may operate at the micro-structural level, whilst studies on the macro-level may, as with Goldmann, recognise the historical limits to their generalisations. It is worth indicating, however, a tendency that links macro-analysis to broad generalisation: both share the characteristic of including

> '... only the typical, recurring characteristics of art and of society ...'. (Kavolis, 1968: 7)

From the above account, the optimal mode of investigation would appear to be that of case studies that include micro-structural analysis without ignoring the broader social context.[1] Yet what kinds of generalisation can one hope for from such an approach? Geertz indicates an answer to this question in his investigation of a particular case study method: the practice of ethnography. He describes attempted explanation in ethnography as 'specification' or 'diagnosis':

> '... stating, as explicitly as we can manage, what the knowledge thus attained (through 'thick description') demonstrates about the society in which it is found and, beyond that, about social life as such.' (1975: 27)

[1] The point is made in Chapter 7, section (iii), p148ff above, that methodological individualism in terms of 'actor' terminology does not imply the neglect of social systems and social groups.

He thus includes two kinds of generalisation[1] that may emerge from ethnographic investigation. The first of these we should call historical generalisation, and involves starting from 'exceedingly extended acquaintances with extremely small matters', and approaching broader interpretations through the 'extension of our analyses to wider contexts'. (1975: 21) The second kind of generalisation, a more abstract theory, does not aim to 'codify abstract regularities', to create general laws, but rather to 'make thick description possible' by attempting -

> '... to take a line of theoretical attack developed in connection with one exercise in ethnographic interpretation and employ it in another ...'.
> (1975: 25-26)

This more abstract theory closely resembles the formal 'general how' models referred to in Chapter 2,[2] rather than more substantive models that postulate general laws. Is is the 'general how' models that we have attempted to develop throughout this thesis, and it is these that we shall use to enable the 'thick description' of the literary expressions of Charlotte and Emily Brontë in Part IV.

In this section we have advocated the undertaking of micro-structural case studies that include the analysis of the author, his orientations and relationships, within the broader social context; and that are both aided by[3], and encourage the development of, historical generalisations and formal models.

1 The distinction is implicit rather than explicit in Geertz's work.

2 See above, Chapter 2, pp 63-64

3 Historical generalisations aid case studies by indicating the broader social context; formal models are of use in suggesting those variables that have been found to be worth taking into account in certain types of study.

The next section again takes its point of departure from Goldmann, and examines the implications of the concepts of 'coherence' and 'totality' for the interpretation of literary works.

(iv) Coherence and Totality in Literary Interpretation

The concept of 'coherence', as we have seen, plays an important part in the work of Goldmann and his followers: great works of literature possess coherence in the sense of presenting a fictional universe that consistently reflects the world view of a social class. Leenhardt claims that the concept of coherence does not refer to logical non-contradiction, but rather to the functioning of the elements in relation to the whole. (1970: 99) In other words, all the elements of a literary universe cohere in their relation to a guiding perspective on the world, even if the elements sometimes seem to contradict one another. In fact, however, Goldmann seems to go further than Leenhardt's more moderate statement implies, and postulates universal 'tendencies to self-consistency', which are especially evident in great works of literature (1973: 115 & 120). At the very least, then, coherence is assumed in great works of literature, if not necessarily consistency; and this assumption of coherence is essential if we are to claim that the universe of a great literary work reflects but one world view that accounts for all the elements of the work.

Coherence is indeed a common criterion for the evaluation of literature. Cassirer, for instance, arguing from a standpoint very different from that of Goldmann, claims that the work of a great poet -

> '... possesses a clear organisation and articulation ... Every single element must be felt as part of a comprehensive whole.' (1970: 185)

Yet Cassirer does not use this statement to support an interpretation of literature in terms of world view. Duvignaud indeed suggests that

the coherence that a work of art possesses has no necessary connection with a 'vision of the world', but may be merely

> '... the result of the particular characteristics of a temperament or personality;' (1972: 39).

On the other hand, lack of coherence should not necessarily deter us from endeavours at interpretation. As Geertz points out,

> '... coherence cannot be the major test of validity for a cultural description. ... The force of our interpretations cannot rest, as they are now so often made to do, on the tightness with which they hold together, or the assurance with which they are argued.' (1975: 17-18)

One may thus dissent from Goldmann's approach on three counts, according to which one may argue: 1) that not all great literature possess coherence; 2) that not all coherent works manifest a coherent world view; 3) that not only coherent works are capable or worthy of sociological interpretation. It might nonetheless still be argued that interpretation of literary works in terms of world view is inappropriate unless the works possess coherence. This would be necessarily true if we accepted the Goldmann definition of world view. Yet in Chapter 3,[1] we contrasted Mannheim's and Goldmann's conceptions of world view, and decided that Mannheim's was less restrictive. In Chapter 6 this argument was taken further, and we arrived at a concept of world view in which neither consistency nor coherence were assumed.[2] There is no reason why this conception of world view should be inapplicable to works of literature that lack coherence.

Before we leave the concept of coherence, it is worth remarking upon the idea of all the elements of a literary work forming one whole, which may then be grasped as the universe of the work. This notion is of course naively optimistic: one can never account for all the aspects of a work. There is the implication here of an objective meaning of the

[1] See above, Chapter 3, p 73

[2] See above, Chapter 6, p 144

work, which can be seized and delineated. The idea of objective meaning is taken up in the next section.

The emphasis on an all-inclusive account of a literary work is paralleled, in the work of Lukács, Goldmann and their followers, by the postulate of 'totality' in a world view; indeed world view here is taken to imply precisely a total or global perspective:

> 'A world vision is defined as 'a significant global structure', a total comprehension of the world which attempts to grasp its meaning in all its complexity and wholeness.' (Swingewood, 1972: 65)

Swingewood points out that Goldmann takes over the concept of totality from Lukács. (Swingewood, 1972: 63) For Lukács, totality is an inherent human desire, and is a fundamental principle of all works of art. In modern alienated society, the artist (particularly the novelist) strives to achieve totality in an attempt to retrieve lost social unity.[1] Laurenson claims that totality in literature becomes more and more difficult to achieve as capitalism progresses: the writer becomes increasingly marginal to capitalist society, both in his function, and with respect to his restricted audience. (1972: 94-96) She seems to imply that if the writer is sufficiently integrated with a wide enough audience, then there are less obstacles to the achievement of totality. Swingewood considers that, whilst Fielding was still able to portray a 'whole society', (1972: 17) the great modern novelists tend to lack this capacity: there is 'no totality' in Lawrence's novels (1972: 86); and the trend of contemporary fiction is to lose grasp of the whole, so that, with Robbe-Grillet and the practitioners of the new novel, the move -

> '... is away from literary totalities towards a wholly private, individual, subjective world - a partial rather than total view.' (1972: 77)

[1] This account of Lukács' theory is taken from de Man, 1966: 530.

It is clear from the above statements that 'totality' is taken to mean something more than merely a coherent perspective: it suggests a certain breadth of coverage. At the extreme it would imply the kind of comprehensiveness that Marx designates as the task of social science, which leads to -

> '... the reproduction of the concrete subject (society) in the course of reasoning.'
> (quoted by Swingewood, 1972: 64)

Less ambitiously conceived, 'totality' would appear to refer to a kind of 'social realism' in literature, the passing of which is regretted by the above theorists. Here a total perspective would take into view the essential elements of the social structure. It is however immediately apparent that an evaluation according to 'totality' is a relative and value-laden judgement: what one critic may consider to be essentials, another may judge as irrelevancies. Certainly we must dissent from the view than an artist can be deemed to deal with a 'whole society'. Duvignaud makes this point forcefully:

> 'It is equally debatable whether an individual can deal with an entire era: to think that a great artist crystallizes in himself the widespread problem of his time and that he embodies in his work an entire civilization is to accept a romantic image which does not correspond to reality ... In addition, this interpretation neglects or ignores the many aspects of real life that cannot be perceived by a single individual, whatever his social status.' (Duvignaud , 1972: 40)

It is in this context that Duvignaud is highly critical of Lukács' attempt to make Goethe into -

> '... the representative of everything his era contained, all the possibilities of experience belonging to his period in history.' (1972: 40)

In the prevailing sense of 'totality', then, one cannot have a global view: all 'world views' are partial and selective - Robbe-Grillet is not alone in this; and the very assumption that the works of certain

writers present a total vision may make one blind to the principles of selection and composition that are operative in the construction of these works. It also encourages a too facile assurance that one can grasp and communicate this total view in literary interpretation, thus refusing to recognise the inherent selectivity of interpretation.

To summarise this section, one need assume neither coherence nor totality in order to be able to apply the concept of 'world view' to literature as long as world view is conceived as in Chapter 6 above, rather than as Goldmann defines it. If, on the other hand, one does assume coherence and totality in literary works (even if restricted to 'great literary works'), then these assumptions tend to reduce awareness of contradictions and partiality, and to encourage one to neglect the inherent problems of literary interpretation. The following section now deals with some of these problems.

(v) Values in Literary Interpretation

Several issues arise from the question of the role of values in literary interpretation. There is firstly the problem of how one is to select the works that are to be interpreted. Goldmann and his followers would wish to restrict their sociology of literature to the study of 'great' literary works: our opinion on this matter has already been made clear above[1], namely that selection according to values is in some sense inevitable, though one should not attempt to validate one's selection in terms of 'objective' greatness; furthermore, that a 'world view' methodology is not necessarily restricted to 'great' literary works - to make this latter assumption would be to introduce value-judgements into the very heart of sociological methodology.

[1] See above, pp 253-254

Apart from the question of values in the selection of literary works, there is the problem of the place of values in the works themselves. At its most extreme, literature is seen as consciously value-oriented, a purposeful search for social values. Swingewood appears to come close to this position:

> 'It could be argued, then, that the 'true' meaning of great literature and the social groups involved in its production lies precisely in the quest and the struggle of both for 'authentic values', the values of a genuine human community in which human needs, aspirations, and desires are mediated through social interaction. If this is so, and it will be defended later in the book ...'
> (1972: 16)

This is strongly reminiscent of the goal-oriented conception of art found in the work of George Mead[1], in which a 'genuine aesthetics' is related to integrative values. More generally, Williams sees art as a form of description which aims at validation:

> 'The selection and interpretation involved in our descriptions embody our attitudes, needs and interests, which we seek to validate by making them clear to others.'
> (1965: 55)

Yet even this most general attempt to describe art as value-oriented is not acceptable, at least where the meaning of value-orientation is taken to imply some kind of attempt at conversion or justification. It is indeed possible to take exactly the opposite view: Duvignaud argues that authenticity depends upon -

> '... detachment from financial, ideological and political concerns - in other words, the authentic work of art cannot serve as a justification for any other activity except itself.' (1972: 37)

Yet this opposite extreme is equally rigid and narrow in its viewpoint; for even if the whole work is not a deliberate justification for some desired state of affairs, it may nonetheless contain legitimations of actions and attitudes portrayed.

[1] See above, Chapter 9, p 200

One may recognise the role of values in literature without adopting either of the above extreme standpoints. As in Chapter 10, literature may be regarded as an intentional construction in which values constitute formative principles,[1] which is not to say that a message is being put across, still less that there is a necessary moralistic element in literature. We merely suggest that, if ideas have significance in the formation of social reality[2], they will play an even greater role in the creation of invented fictional reality; and, where some sense of commitment is involved in the guiding ideas of literary construction, we may speak of 'value-ideas'. Where these play some part in the selection and organisation of the subject-matter of a literary work, then our interpretation of that work will concentrate less upon the nature of the subject-matter in its own right, and more upon the <u>indication</u> that its composition offers of the operation of the guiding value-ideas. The search for such value-ideas is encouraged by the view of artistic creation as intentional and purposive, rather than instinctive or habitual.[3] This does <u>not</u> mean, however, that the author is <u>intentionally</u> presenting a value-idea through the composition of his subject-matter, in the way that Barthes suggests that, in myth, the 'concept' is intentional and is the motivation which caused the myth to be uttered. (1973: 118) If every literary work has a 'message'[4], the value-ideas of which it is constituted may nonetheless be without consistency, without even unconscious aim of conversion, and indeed unrecognised by the author.

1 See above, Chapter 10, p. 246

2 See Eve, 1975: 68

3 See Cassirer, 1970: 158

4 This is suggested by Orwell: 'But every writer, especially every novelist, <u>has</u> a 'message', whether he admits it or not, and the minutest details of his work are influenced by it. All art is propaganda.' (1965: 125)

Thus one meaning of literary interpretation in sociology would be to explicate the value-ideas[1] that, largely unconsciously, guide the construction of the fictional universe. Such interpretation would be relatively easy if there were certain clearly ascertainable predominant concerns in the literary work; but usually one must face the possibility, as for any other human expression, of several meaningfully adequate interpretations. This contrasts with Goldmann's view of elucidating the 'objective meaning' of the work, [2] and with Leenhardt's notion of the exposition of the world view of a literary work enabling the interpretation of its various elements. (Leenhardt, 1970: 106) As Collingwood points out, there is no such thing as 'the' meaning of the work (1958: 311): the corollary of this is that literary analysis, as indeed cultural analysis generally, is 'intrinsically incomplete'. (Geertz, 1975: 29) To claim a complete interpretation would thus be to ignore the part that our concerns play in the analysis of literature. In the terms of Gadamer, via Janet Wolff, literary interpretation may be seen to involve a 'hermeneutic mediation' of the work and its 'Dasein' and the interpreter and his Dasein (Wolff, 1975: 3): in relation to the above discussion, one might replace 'Dasein' by 'value-ideas'. Valid literary interpretation must thus always be both value-referent[3] ( in the sense of investigating what appear to be the predominant value-ideas expressed by the work), and value-relevant (in the sense of recognising one's own selective interest in the construction of an interpretation, and thus in the emphasis upon

1 Note that these are not necessarily those of the author.

2 See above, p 258

3 Aron uses the concept of 'value-reference' in a similar sense: 'And the science of culture is a comprehension, through value-reference, of existences that are defined by the creation of values.' (1968: 205) Aron, in stressing the values inherent in the subject-matter, tends to underemphasise the role of the values of the researcher (1968: 189); and yet elsewhere he recognises the role of 'our' values in research, and thus acknowledges the principle of value-relevance. (1964: 68-70)

certain focal points - upon particular aspects of the predominant themes, and upon a number of subsidiary themes - that one considers to be at least indirectly relevant to one's 'evaluative attitudes'.[1]) There is no intrinsic reason why objectivity cannot be achieved within the compass of value-relevance, unless, that is, one's own interests in the matter are so narrow and inflexible as to exclude altogether the recognition of value-ideas predominant in the work, and hence to provide what must be deemed a distortive interpretation.

There remains however the problem of how one is to render explicit certain aspects of the implicit value-ideas, the 'unstated meaning structures' (Cicourel, 1964: 153), in the literary work. Wellek and Warren point out that one cannot rely on the author's own explicit pronouncements on his work, as these may be better understood as ideal plans, rationalisations, or currently acceptable critical formulae. (1963: 148) Thus we cannot use the author's statements to avoid the responsibility of constructing our own reading of the work. This involves giving a conceptual expression to what is implicitly assumed in the work; as Leenhardt points out, the construction of conceptually schematised world views for literary works is the product of critical elaboration: the works themselves only hint at such schemas. (1970: 105) In formulating the universe of the work, in elucidating its implicit 'structures of signification' (Geertz, 1975: 9), it must be recognised that we are involved in a process of translation[2]: to conceptualise the implicit-unstated means 'fixing it into inspectable form' (Geertz, 1975: 19)[3], and this form of presentation cannot but transmute the 'content':

1 See Weber, 1949: 151.

2 The necessity of translation in all sociological interpretation was noted above, Chapter 10, pp 226-227

3 Craib similarly notes that the sociological interpretation of literature involves a reconstruction into explicit terminology. (Craib, 1974: 326)

> '... the line between mode of representation and substantive content is as undrawable in cultural analysis as it is in painting;' (Geertz, 1975: 16).

It is ironic that the very 'structure of feeling', evidence of which Williams suggests is best provided by the arts of the period (1965: 64-65), and which he carefully distinguishes from the formulised 'social character' (1965: 63), must itself, as soon as conceptually inscribed largely in terms of values, become akin in form to the social character; although, of course, the structure of feeling will include less publicly stated and official values, and will admit divergent cognitions and evaluations. In conceptual form, then, the structure of feeling will necessarily lose some of the vague and amorphous quality of 'feeling', and will have become transmuted into the inspectable form of value-ideas.

Having discussed the conceptual translatory, value-referent and value-relevant characteristics of sociological interpretation, we must now consider which questions may be directed at the literary work in order to elucidate those aspects which are relevant to both its values and our values.

### (vi) Questions to Direct at the Literary Work

In this final section before the conclusion of this chapter, we suggest various questions that are worth bearing in mind during the analysis of a novel. These questions relate to general aspects of the world view of the novel, and in particular the broad social attitudes that are conveyed. Although some questions touch on the expressive style and certain structural characteristics of the work, in general the features of literary style (except for some connotations) and of general form are not considered. The response of contemporary readers to the novel is also ignored, as are matters concerning the motivation of the author and the forms available to him. These factors are highly significant in relation to why particular cognitions and evaluations are

apparent in the work, but they are less relevant for a mere elucidation of predominant attitudes therein. If one starts with a description of the 'universe of the work', however, this will be of considerable help in an investigation of the formative principles involved in its construction.

In formulating a set of questions worthy of consideration in literary interpretation, we have found the work of certain writers especially helpful: in particular, the essay by George Orwell on Charles Dickens (Orwell, 1965) presents one of the best interpretations of a single author's work in the whole of the sociology of literature: many of the questions that are implicit in Orwell's study are included in our list of questions below. In addition, the work of various literary critics and interpreters has been analysed for topics that appear to be generally worthy of consideration: studies by Kahn, Woolf and Auerbach were found to be of particular relevance.[1] The list of questions, which was originally formulated to aid the interpretation of the novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, has subsequently been modified to include further questions that emerged as significant in the examination of their works. Questions relating to our specific interest in aspects of class, and the consciousness involved therein, have not however been included. The questions are of a general nature, but do not pretend to be universally applicable:[2] they are likely to be of greatest use in the interpretation of those novels that conform to the 'dominant models of nineteenth century fiction', which are 'rooted in the conceptual scheme of a biography', in which the character is 'perceived as living testimony to social and historical determinism', and which aim to clarify, organise and explain the human condition. (Zéraffa, 1973: 47-51) It must further be noted that the list of questions

1 See Kahn, 1938; Woolf, 1966; Auerbach, 1953.

2 Thus, although our list of questions might resemble the attempt by Kluckhohn to outline a framework of 'universal human problems' for the 'systematic ordering of cultural value orientations' (1953: 345), we do not claim to present a universal and exhaustive scheme for the interpretation of the value orientations of 'all people at all times and in all places' (1953: 346), but rather suggest the utility of bearing in mind a set of possible points of investigation in the interpretation of a historical form of literature.

does not in any sense constitute a questionnaire that must be rigidly followed as a framework for literary analysis. It is more akin to a set of possible topics that may fruitfully be born in mind in depth interviews with novels!

The questions are divided into five sections: A., those that have a broad application throughout the novel; B., those that apply generally to all three of the roughly differentiated areas of the subject-matter: characters (including their spheres of activity), relationships between characters (including social groups portrayed), and society (including broader group-relationships and institutions); and C., D. and E., those that apply more specifically to each of these areas. In questions concerning content, the negative is always implied: e.g., what is not included. In questions concerning evaluation, a concern with both the type and content of evaluation is implied: e.g., not only whether the evaluation is positive or negative, but whether the type is moral, aesthetic, utilitarian, etc. Inevitably there is some overlap between questions.

Guide for the Construction of World Views from Novels: Questions To Bear in Mind

A. Questions of Broad Application Throughout the Novel

Human nature: What are the basic characteristics of human nature? What is the evaluation thereof?

Ways of life: What ways of life are seen to be possible? How are the different ways of life evaluated? How definite/vacuous is the ideal way of life?

Assumptions: Which prevailing cognitions and evaluations are questioned/assumed?

Extensions: Which cognitions and evaluations appear to be extended beyond their original context to apply to other spheres?

Contradictions: What are the contexts of apparently contradictory cognitions and evaluations?

Uncertainties: What are the uncertainties (which perhaps give momentum to the plot of the novel), and which are resolved or left unresolved?

Readers: What types of reader are presupposed? What is the supposed and desired relationship between author and readers? Is this relationship manifested in an expressive style?

B. Questions Applying Generally to All Three Areas of the Subject Matter

(Note that when the question relates to characters, it may apply equally to the other areas of the subject-matter: relationships, institutions, etc.)

Content: What is the subject-matter of the novel? Who is portrayed? (- according to objective factors, such as occupation, sex, status; and subjective factors, such as ends, values and beliefs, and the vocabularies of motive supplied for characters). What spheres of activity, relationships, institutions, aspects of past and future, etc., are portrayed?

Compatability: Which phenomena, attributes etc. are seen as being compatible/incompatible of co-existence?

Realism: How are the characters treated with respect to

- fullness of detail/simplication?
- a dynamic 'process'/a static 'snap-shot' perspective?
- a subjective-empathetic/objective-external assessment?

Development: In what ways do the characters change/develop? Why do they change/develop?

- internally plausible reasons.
- author's machination.

Evaluation: Which of the characters are valued most/least highly? (e.g., Who are the heroes and villains? Which of the various institutions represented are closest to the ideal?)

What is the evaluative basis for these judgements?

What evaluations are offered concerning the development (actual or potential) of the characters? What are the causes and consequences of the highly and poorly regarded qualities presented?

Devices: Where and how are devices used to make evaluational points? - e.g., the sympathetic treatment of a character; the ridicule of an institution; 'magical' devices to solve problems of evaluational inconsistency.

Consistency: How consistent is the assessment of the characters?

- in the same character.
- between different characters.

Placement in Time: Given the author's period, what is conspicuous by its presence or absence, either in terms of subject-matter or evaluation?

C. Questions Applying More Specifically to Characters

Identification: Which of the characters does the author appear to identify with, e.g. autobiographically?

Superiority/Inferiority: Which of the characters does the author treat as inferior/equal/superior to self? What is the evaluative basis for such treatment?

Sphere of Individual's Control: To what extent are each of the characters seen as being able to influence their own future? This question includes:

- What problems do the characters face, and what solutions are deemed to be open to them and to be efficacious? How are these various solutions evaluated?

- Where does the potentiality for their self-determination stop? At which points and in what ways does the real world constrain them?

- To what extent is there resort to the unexpected 'deus ex machina' type of solution to a character's problems? Where does this occur and why is it thought to be necessary?

Poetic Justice: To what extent and in what ways (e.g., 'internal' punishments such as guilt-feelings; 'external' punishments such as prison; other-worldly punishments such as Hell) do good and evil gain their just rewards?

D. Questions Applying More Specifically to Social Groups Portrayed

Members of Groups: Who (including characteristics and evaluation thereof) is chosen for portrayal out of the groups which constitute the subject-matter?

Representativeness: Are these individuals representative of these groups? Are they supposed by the author to be representative? If they are not representative, why are just these individuals chosen for portrayal?

Categorisation: What criteria constitute the basis for the author's own groupings in the novel? Does he make apparent his self-categorisation?

E. Questions Applying More Specifically to Broad Institutions and Society

Society in General: What evaluation is conveyed of society in general, and what appears to be the reason for this evaluation?

Large-Scale Social Change: What, if any, are the possibilities of large-scale social change?

- possibilities according to the social structure portrayed in the novel.

- possibilities envisaged by the author.

What is the evaluation of these possibilities?

Remedies: Which remedies are recognised as possible within the existing social order, and which are not? (i.e. Which social 'ills' can be 'cured'?) By what means can these remedies be effected? Which means of minor social remedy are favoured, which not, and why?

(vii) Conclusion

This chapter commenced with an examination of Goldmann's sociology of literature, and concentrated upon its methodological implications, which led to certain suggested modifications of Goldmann's basic assumptions, centred around conceptions of the author, of coherence and totality in literature, and of 'objective meaning' in interpretation. These modifications were developed in the three subsequent sections.

Firstly, the argument of macro-versus micro-analysis was taken up, and, apart from a re-affirmation of the study of the author in the sociology of literature, a conclusion was reached upon an optimal mode of investigation, that involves the undertaking of a micro-structural

case study without neglecting the broader social context. Historical generalisation and formal models were emphasised as the two types of generalisation that one may use for and derive from such studies.

Secondly, the concepts of 'coherence' and 'totality' were examined in greater depth. Neither was found to be necessary as a prerequisite for the analysis of literature in terms of world view; and in fact their assumption was deemed to reduce awareness of contradictions, partiality, and the problems of literary interpretation.

Thirdly, there was a discussion of the role of value in literary analysis: in the sense of selecting literary works for study; in the (rejected) sense of literature being necessarily value-oriented; in the sense of the value-reference of literature, according to which value-ideas may act as formative principles of literary works; in the sense of the value-relevance of literary interpretation, in which one's own concerns must be recognised. The notion of the 'objective meaning' of a literary work was rejected, along with the idea of a 'complete' interpretation. Interpretation was seen as necessarily translatory, giving 'inspectable' conceptual form to unstated structures of meaning.

Finally a list of questions was proposed, indicating topics that are considered worthwhile bearing in mind during the analysis of a novel, where one is concerned to elucidate general aspects of the world view that it conveys.

Having completed Part III, and therewith our investigation of theoretical and methodological issues in the sociology of literature, we may now proceed to bring together our conclusions on the sociology of literature (Part III) with our interest in the development of an individual's world view in relation to class elements (Part II), in an analysis of the novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë.

# P A R T  I V: TWO CASE STUDIES IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE

## INTRODUCTION TO PART IV

The empirical research into the life and literature of Charlotte and Emily Brontë has two main functions: it serves as an illustration of the way in which the general theoretical models developed in previous chapters may be applied to gain insight into the world view development and literary works of particular individuals; yet, while it may act as an illustration for the reader of this thesis, for the writer thereof it served to generate many of the theoretical and methodological concepts and ideas discussed in previous chapters[1] - for, as noted in Chapter 1,[2] the order in which the thesis is laid out is not that in which it was researched.

In the Brontë research there is an application of the particular approach to the sociology of literature that was emphasised in Part III, i.e. the bringing together of the sociology of knowledge and the sociology of literature for the analysis of literary expression. The general conceptual models developed in Part I, in relation to the sociology of knowledge, and the more specific models developed in Part II, concerning the development of world view in relation to class elements, are thus combined with the recognition of those factors seen in Part III to be relevant to the study of literary expression; so that the focus is upon the development of consciousness (both in the author's world view and in the world views of her literary works) in relation both to the elements of her class and to her authorship role. There is therefore clearly an emphasis, in the interpretation of the novels, upon class-related cognitions and evaluations; yet this should not prevent us from recognising the value-

1 For instance, the concept 'expressive style' was generated from the research on Charlotte and Emily Brontë. On the other hand the subsequent re-working of the Brontë research was considerably improved by the systematic application of this concept, which had been clarified in the theoretical sections of the thesis. To use an apposite term, we witness here a 'dialectical' method of concept formation.

2 See above, Chapter 1, p 5

reference[1] of the novels, e.g. as indicated by the general questions posed at the end of Chapter 11.[2]

In concentrating upon the development of consciousness in the world views of Charlotte and Emily Brontë and their novels, the research that follows is in accordance with the theoretical emphasis in previous chapters.[3] Yet, inevitably, themes have been explored in earlier chapters which pass beyond the confines of relevance to the particular empirical studies of Charlotte and Emily Brontë: the Brontë research does indeed utilise many, but cannot involve all, of the previously expounded concepts and models. Nor does the research, on the other hand, claim to present a definitive account of the development of the world views of Charlotte and Emily Brontë; the focus is upon class and author-role related factors. The study is thus not concerned with a social-psychological examination of why the Brontës took to writing in their youth, even where the economic situation in which they found themselves is relevant to such an examination. The world view of Charlotte and Emily, before undertaking economic action, is taken as a starting point, and is not traced back to family background, childhood reading and experiences, etc. Nor are the world views investigated for their derivation from the Victorian norm; and forms and devices in the novels are considered more for their particular utilisation than for their origin. Whilst the world views of authors and novels are seen in their contemporary cultural context, the emphasis is upon selection and developments from predominant world views, rather than tracing these latter back to broad features of the class structure of the contemporary society.

The selection of Charlotte Brontë and her novels as principal research topic was guided by several factors. Her novels present a

1 See above, Chapter 11, p 274

2 See above, Chapter 11, p 278 ff

3 See for instance the emphasis upon the development of the consciousness of a particular individual, in Chapter 7, p 158 above.

less obvious target for world view interpretation than those of the social realists; the novels show considerable variation in form, and cannot easily be subsumed under a predominant early Victorian literary mode; her role as author cannot be naively treated as a class role - all these factors make the study of Charlotte Brontë and her novels more complex and interesting; yet a depth analysis is rendered easier by her relatively small number of novels, and by the richness of biographical evidence that is available to us, particularly from the work of her contemporary Mrs. Gaskell. With Charlotte's sister Emily we are less fortunate: the biographical evidence is very scanty. Here we have to rely upon the well-known events in Emily's life, supplemented by the few statements, principally from Charlotte, that give indication of her world view. With Emily Brontë we are thus forced to undertake an activity of dubious validity, i.e. to take the author's literary expressions as evidence of her own world view.[1] This is however more reasonable with Emily Brontë than with many other authors, as her literary works are sufficiently deviant to discourage interpretation as fabrications in accordance with readers' expectations. Clearly, though, hypothesising Emily Brontë's world view from her novel is given greater credibility where we have supporting evidence from the scanty biographical details available to us.

To use a literary document as a heuristic means for disclosing an individual's characteristic 'outlook on life' is one of the ways in which Weber suggests that source material[2] may be used in historical research. (1949: 141-2) Our studies of Charlotte and Emily Brontë in fact view the novels in all three of Weber's suggested ways in which Goethe's letters acquire 'significance' for history: as heuristic means for the development of class-concepts (as in the development of the concepts of 'promotions', 'extensions' and 'expressive style' through the research on Charlotte Brontë); as heuristic means

1 It was pointed out in Chapter 9 (p 211 above) that one must beware of taking a literary work as a straightforward document of the world view of its author.

2 Weber's example is Goethe's letters to Frau von Stein. (Weber, 1949: 138ff).

for the disclosure of the characteristic features of a phenomenon (e.g. Emily Brontë's world view); and as a component of a historical causal context (as in the explanation of aspects of the expressive style of 'Jane Eyre', or in the account of the influence of the success of 'Jane Eyre' upon Charlotte Brontë's later novels).

Of these three modes of significance that literature may have for the cultural sciences, the second, as we have indicated, is the most fraught with dangers, especially where (as with Emily Brontë) supporting evidence is scanty. Paucity of evidence also renders our hypotheses on Emily Brontë's literary role somewhat speculative: for instance, there is little information on the ways in which Emily may have taken account of her audience.[1] This contrasts with Charlotte, whose letters, as we shall see, provide considerable evidence of the literary role contacts that have salience for her. There is the additional difficulty in studying Emily that we do not even have evidence of the development of her world view in the form of a second novel: Emily's response to the critical reaction to 'Wuthering Heights' thus cannot be investigated.

The work on Emily Brontë thus functions principally as a comparison point for the research on Charlotte, rather than as a study in its own right.[2] It also constitutes a preliminary trial for the development and application of some of the concepts in Parts I-III of the thesis. In some ways the study of Emily Brontë becomes an exemplification of the problems inherent in an analysis of literature according to our approach, whilst the research on Chrlotte Brontë reveals the more positive possibilities of this approach.

1 For the importance of 'taking account' in literary expression, see above, Chapter 9, p 211

2 It is for this reason that an additional study of Anne Brontë would not have added significantly to the value of the research in Part IV: even the poverty of evidence we have on Emily is richer than the evidence available on the life and thought of Anne. See "The Brontës: Charlotte and Emily", by L L Hinkley (1945) - particularly p 104.

Despite the difficulties and uncertainties, the research on Emily Brontë and 'Wuthering Heights' is nonetheless extremely valuable for us, even though mainly as a contrast to Charlotte. Charlotte and Emily both start from the same economic situation, of course, and there is indeed little change in the economic situation of either; our interest thus focuses upon their developing economic action (and conditions thereof) and work situation, which do contrast significantly, and which may provide a source of explanation for their strikingly different literary expressions.

In sections (i) and (vii) a short biographical outline is presented of the author concerned. The analysis here is in terms of sociological rationality, and emphasises the values, ends and means of the author in the economic sphere.[1] For these biographical sections we have used principally Mrs. Gaskell: 'The Life of Charlotte Brontë', supplemented by Lane (1969) and Willis (1963). All page references to the Mrs. Gaskell work and to the Brontë novels are to the Thornton Edition, Edinburgh 1924.

[1] For a fuller description of this model of analysis, see Chapter 5, p 121 ff

# CHAPTER 12: WORLD VIEW AND CLASS IN THE LIVES AND WORKS OF EMILY AND CHARLOTTE BRONTË

## (i) Emily Brontë: An Atypical Author

The attraction that Emily Brontë holds as a subject for research lies partly in her relation to her contemporary context: both novel and author are distinctly atypical amongst the many of each produced by the early Victorian period. One particular unusual aspect of Emily's situation springs to mind, i.e. her extreme isolation[1]: her work was undertaken principally at home; her periods of residence away from the Haworth parsonage were few and short; her social contacts were similarly few, interaction being impeded by her famous 'reserve'. (Gaskell: 110) This isolation meant that she was unable to develop a direct knowledge of many and varied others: it is hardly surprising that her novel is so unlike the 'social novel' we see as being so characteristic of the time.

A significant factor in Emily's relative isolation is her economic orientation and action. With similar opportunities as Charlotte and Anne for leaving home to become a governess, she nevertheless chose to stay at home to look after her father and to undertake general household tasks (Willis, 1963: 75), rather than living as an employee in someone else's household, subject to their routines, their moods, their supervision, and without the independence that comes from the latitude provided by tolerance in a family situation. The constricting nature of available work situations was abhorrent to all of the Brontë sisters,

[1] This is not, of course, to claim that she was free from social influences, but merely that her isolation was relatively greater - to an extent unrecognised e.g. by Eagleton, 1975 - than that of other authors of her period, and that her world view would probably have developed less atypically had her isolation been less extreme.

but particularly so to Emily, whose suffering when away from Haworth for any length of time was so profound that she was acknowledged by the sisters to be the one who should stay at Haworth. (Gaskell: 122) Her duties at home could be carried out in her own way and time, and allowed her fertile imagination to wander unimpeded. She was able to be solitary without being questioned, and she could escape all human contact frequently in her walks over the beloved familiar moorlands near her home.

If we consider more systematically the various ways in which Emily could maintain or improve her economic situation, we find six basic means: writing, teaching as a governess, teaching in a school, marriage, inheritance, dependence upon her family. The first she never seriously considered in economic terms. Her ambitions as a writer had never been for public success, as with Charlotte, and indeed she was greatly distressed when Charlotte by chance discovered the poems whose secrecy Emily had carefully preserved. It took much persuasion from Charlotte before Emily would consent to have the poems published (Gaskell: 264-5); though, of course, subsequently all three sisters agreed to complete a novel for publication. If any public literary ambition arose then, it seems to have been far from monetarily inspired; and indeed, as Lane points out, 'Wuthering Heights' and Anne's 'Agnes Grey' were accepted by the publishing firm of Newby -

> '... on rather grudging terms, by which a part of the expense was to be borne by the authors.'
> (1969: 207)

Whatever the nature of Emily's literary ambition, there is no doubt about her relative isolation from the literary world of publishers and critics: her contact with these in her role as author was minimal. Her publishing activities were handled largely by Charlotte, both in the case of the

poems the three sisters published together, and in at least the early attempts at having the novels published. (Gaskell: 264-282) It is also noteworthy that it was Charlotte and Anne who travelled to London to establish with their publishers the separate identity of the Brontë sisters: Emily as usual remained at home. (Gaskell: 327) As for the influence of critical reaction to 'Wuthering Heights', this is impossible to estimate: it is unclear whether the critics' negative evaluations of the novel discouraged her from embarking upon a second work, or whether, as some evidence suggests (Lane, 1969: 224-5), she began another work which was never completed, either accommodating her work to the views of the critics or else ignoring them.

Teaching as a governess or in a school were forms of economic action that Emily had to consider: the former, as noted above, she rejected; but she did take a post as a teacher to a school in Halifax for six months. (Gaskell: 122) This was the sole period of employment that Emily undertook outside of Haworth parsonage,[1] and it can hardly have encouraged her: Charlotte describes it as -

> '... hard labour from six in the morning to eleven at night, with only one half-hour of exercise between. This is slavery.'
> (Charlotte Brontë, letter dated October 2nd. 1836, in Gaskell: 131)

Nevertheless it seems that Emily was favourably inclined to the proposal by Charlotte that the three sisters should set up a school themselves, and even agreed to go with Charlotte to Brussels, so that they could improve their French and begin German. (Willis, 1963: 84-5) The idea of a school run by themselves clearly presented a more attractive work situation than the apparent alternatives:

[1] Apart from some odd piano lessons she gave whilst in Brussels - Lane, 1969: 167

> 'To have a school, was to have some portion of daily leisure, uncontrolled but by her own sense of duty; it was for the three sisters ... to be together under one roof, and yet earning their own subsistence;'
> (Gaskell: 190)

Yet even in this situation, Emily would have found it unpleasant to take up the fixed, attention-absorbing duties of a teacher; as Charlotte writes to M. Heger:

> 'Emily does not care much for teaching, but she would look after the house-keeping, and, although something of a recluse, she is too good-hearted not to do all she could for the well-being of the children.'
> (Lane, 1969: 179)

The plan, however, through lack of response to their attempts to gain pupils, had eventually to be given up -

> '... by Anne with painful disappointment, by Emily (one suspects) with secret relief, and by Charlotte with a crushing sense of defeat.'
> (Lane, 1969: 180)

As for marriage, it is unlikely that Emily ever considered this as a means of gaining economic security: indeed there is no evidence that she considered it at all. Certainly her 'reserve' would have acted against any deep relationship arising with an eligible young man; and in any case Emily's deep involvement in her fantasy world of the 'Gondal' chronicles[1] may have made any actual individual encountered seem all too unglamorous compared with those available in her imagination.

Since the above listed means available to Emily to maintain or improve her economic situation were either rejected or not considered by her, she was forced to rely upon her relatives. She inherited a small sum from Aunt Branwell, but her principal dependence was upon her father and sisters. Her economic ends appear to have been very modest:

[1] See Ratchford, 1955.

it seems that she desired only to be able to continue living in relatively independent isolation near her moors, and that she was thus perfectly satisfied with taking on the household tasks in return for financial dependence upon her family. It is significant that in 1839, when two of the sisters had to find work and one had to stay behind at Haworth, it was Emily who was chosen to remain:

> '... Charlotte and Anne must put their shoulders to the wheel. One daughter was needed at home, to stay with Mr Brontë and Miss Branwell. ... And Emily, who suffered and drooped more than her sisters when away from Haworth, was the one appointed to remain.'
> (Gaskell: 152)

Similarly in 1843, when Charlotte returned to Brussels and Anne continued as governess with the Robinsons, Emily again stayed behind at Haworth to look after her father, who, with his deteriorating eyesight, could not be left alone. Emily was indeed 'well content to stay at home'. (Lane, 1969: 169) She was apparently satisfied with minimal social interaction and a modest economic situation: in her diary paper of 1845 she writes -

> 'We have cash enough for our present wants ... I am quite contented for myself ... seldom or never troubled with nothing to do, and merely desiring that everybody could be as comfortable as myself and as undesponding ...'
> (Lane, 1969: 195)

Her predominant work situation at Haworth, amongst her family, offered Emily the maximum amount of social independence she could expect, free play for her imagination, freedom from constricting occupational worries, and freedom from a demanding job or husband. Given her values, it is hardly surprising that she was reluctant to take employment away from Haworth.

From a review of Emily Brontë's biography, we thus emerge with a picture of a person who is highly independent (in a social rather than

economic sense), who has relatively few social contacts and undergoes very little paid employment, and for whom marriage and economic advancement are apparently insignificant goals; - an author, yet with few ends in terms of public success, at least at first, and indeed publishing only a small collection of poems and one novel, and having but slight contact with the literary world of pubishers and critics.

(ii) The Influence of Emily Brontë's Economic Action upon the Cognitive and Evaluative Content of 'Wuthering Heights'

We see the influence of Emily's economic action most clearly in the cognitive selection involved in constructing the universe of the novel, and most strikingly in the lack of portrayal of work. There is of course mention of household tasks, such as cooking, washing, ironing, sewing (e.g. pp 121, 457, 462-3) - tasks that Emily herself would have undertaken at Haworth Parsonage; but occupations, in the narrower sense of earning one's living, are portrayed with little complexity: this is the case, for instance, with Heathcliff's and Hareton's agricultural work, of which we obtain only a crude background impression (e.g. pp 66 & 291). Occupational work generally takes place on the dim periphery of the 'Wuthering Heights' universe, as in the brief mentions of the doctor, lawyer and curate (e.g. pp 129-130, 421 & 59); or in Heathcliff's obtaining his money one knows not how before he returns after Catherine's marriage:

> 'I stated before that I didn't know how he gained his money;'
>
> (p 134)

Much of the economic action undertaken by the 'Wuthering Heights' characters does not involve visible work, as in Edgar, the landowner; Hindley, small farmer but not seen in farming activity (if undertaken); Heathcliff, the property-owner and gentleman farmer after his return (e.g., we see

him instructing Joseph about 'some farming business', but we do not learn the nature of the business, or see Joseph carrying out the 'minute directions' he has been given. - p 490); Mr Lockwood, who becomes 'tired of being banished from the world' (p 450) and returns to London for six months (p 442), either to an unknown occupation, or, more likely, to his independent means. The other major characters are mainly economically dependent: Catherine Earnshaw, dependent on Hindley before marriage, and on Edgar after marriage; Isabella, dependent on Edgar before marriage, then on Heathcliff after marriage, and then, after running away, somehow existing, we know now how, 'in the south, near London' (p 271); Catherine Linton, dependent on Edgar before marriage, and upon Heathcliff after her marriage to Linton Heathcliff:

> 'The rest of them do earn their bread - you live on my charity!', says Heathcliff to her, p 42.;

Linton Heathcliff, dependent on Heathcliff, but destined for inheritance; Hareton, until the end of the novel -

> '... reduced to a state of complete dependence on his father's inveterate enemy; and lives in his own house as a servant deprived of the advantage of wages ...' (p 279)

The emphasis upon economic dependence is to be expected, given Emily's own economic circumstances; and the sparse portrayal of occupational work is consistent with her own narrow experience.

The role of dependent economic situations in the novel is indeed of considerable significance: around economic dependence is constructed an important, though probably not predominant, theme of the novel - a theme which seems clearly influenced by Emily's own economic action conditions, i.e. the lack of opportunity for women to achieve economic independence. In contrast to the world of Charlotte's novels, in 'Wuthering Heights'

there is no apparent escape even to employment as a governess. The three main female characters (apart from the principle narrator) in the novel illustrate the lack of opportunities: Isabella has a choice between dependence upon Edgar or upon a husband; in marrying Heathcliff she cuts off her ties with disapproving Edgar (pp 197-8 & 217), and in leaving Heathcliff she fends we know not how. In contrast, Heathcliff is able to go away and, though again we know not how, gain a substantial sum of money to keep him financially independent thereafter[1]:

> '"Rich, sir!" she returned. "He has, nobody knows what money, and every year it increases ..."'
> (p 47)

Catherine Linton (junior) is originally expected to inherit her father's wealth, but, through a contrived marriage to Heathcliff's dying son, and through Heathcliff's own marriage to Isabella, this money eventually comes to Heathcliff (p 437), and she, 'destitute of cash', becomes dependent on him: not until his death can she hope for financial independence through inheritance. Her mother, however, provides the best illustration of the economic opportunities within the universe of 'Wuthering Heights': Catherine Earnshaw is unable to obtain any work or use any private money for the purpose of continuing to live at her accustomed standard. Marrying Heathcliff would immediately take her down to his level of poverty, which could not apparently be alleviated through any economic action on her part. Her only solution, then, since Hindley is unlikely to die soon, and would in any case leave his property to his son, is to marry Edgar, and only <u>then</u> will she be able to help Heathcliff materially:

[1] Dupont, in 'Trois Notes Sur Les Brontë', points out that the rapid making of a fortune is not an unrealistic and magical literary device for Emily, but rather was an occurrence that she would have encountered frequently in reading the Leeds Mercury of the time, which reported dramatic rises to wealth associated with the Railway-Bubble and with emigration lands speculation. (Dupont, 1953: 16-19)

> '... if Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars ... whereas, if I marry Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power.'
> (p 120)

The influence of Emily's economic action upon the evaluative content of 'Wuthering Heights' is seen most strongly in the attitudes of her characters towards money. We have already seen how predominantly inheritance and financial dependency figure in the livelihoods of the characters. Whilst this often creates difficulties (as we have seen for the female characters in particular), these arise more from the fact that inheritance is not always available, and from the possibility of one's being financially dependent upon someone one detests, rather than from an aversion to those economic means per se and a contrasting desire to earn one's living through paid employment. The impression one receives is that, according to the world view in 'Wuthering Heights', this latter alternative is to be avoided if possible: if it is unavoidable, then it should be completed as soon as possible, Heathcliff-style. A wealthy economic situation is valued, not for the money itself or the status that it brings, but rather for the independence that it attains, an independence that frees one from the necessity of actively maintaining or furthering one's economic situation. This, then, appears to be the economic value-position in the 'Wuthering Heights' world view: it is shared by those of whom the author seems to approve, and, where characters neglect a proper evaluation of economic matters, they and others may suffer the consequence.

For example, the principle heroines, the two Catherines, are both motivated by status, but both overcome this in their eventual unequivocal love for Heathcliff (Catherine senior) or Hareton (Catherine junior). But, by the time Catherine senior abandons her concerns for status, it is too late: she is able to reconcile with Heathcliff without reservation only

at the time of her death (pp 241-2); and by then Heathcliff has degenerated from the unobsessed freedom of his early days with Catherine Earnshaw, into a mean and vicious man intent on accumulation of wealth for the sake of power and revenge:

> '... he's very near - close-handed; ... he could not have borne to miss the chance of getting a few hundred more. It is strange people should be so greedy when they are alone in the world!'
>
> (p 47)

> 'The villagers affirmed Mr. Heathcliff was 'near', and a cruel hard landlord to his tenants;'
>
> (p 293)

> '... my violent exertions. ... I get levers and mattocks to demolish the two houses, ... everything is ready and in my power ... My old enemies have not beaten me - now would be the precise time to revenge myself on their representatives - I could do it and none could hinder me.'
>
> (p 479)

This ruthless pursuit of a path towards economic power stems from Catherine Earnshaw's status considerations, which drive Heathcliff to leave 'Wuthering Heights' to seek his fortune:

> 'He had listened till he heard Catherine say it would degrade her to marry him, and then he stayed to hear no further.'
>
> (p 118)

The revealed consequences of false economic evaluations indicate Emily's concern at the ill effects of placing value on money other than for the sake of independence from occupational worries.

In Isabella, the concern for the status that economic situation attains is considerably greater: she feels at a loss at 'Wuthering Heights', where the comforts obtained by wealth, and associated with her former status, are lacking. The author's condemnation of Isabella's weakness, lack of resourcefulness, and dependence upon servants, is indicated both through the open gibes of the 'Wuthering Heights' residents, and even through Nelly Dean's attempt at defending her:

> 'I hope you'll consider that Mrs. Heathcliff is accustomed to be looked after and waited on, and that she has been brought up like an only daughter, whom every one was ready to serve. You must let her have a maid to keep things tidy about her ...'
> (p 223)

The reader's sympathy is however engaged for Isabella's predicament of being dependent on a man she detests.

A comparison of Hareton and Linton Heathcliff, rivals for Catherine Linton's affection, reveals Emily's sympathy with Hareton's lack of concern for wealth compared with Linton Heathcliff's feeble and avaricious nature: the progressive revelation of the despicable character of the latter (the offspring of the mercenary Heathcliff and the weak Isabella) contrasts with Hareton's heroic emergence at the end of the novel as Catherine Linton's betrothed.

Hindley and Joseph, neither of whom are portrayed favourably, both appear very mercenary. Hindley turns to gambling:

> 'There were some persons sitting at cards - Heathcliff joined them; my brother (Hindley) lost some money to him; and, finding him plentifully supplied, he requested that he would come again in the evening, ... he (Hindley) was always greedy, though what he grasps with one hand he flings away with the other.'
> (pp 146-7)

> '... Hindley has been borrowing money on his land; and does nothing but play and drink, ...'
> (p 153)

Joseph's appraisals of people are partly dependent on their economic power to benefit him:

> '... Joseph ... fortunately recognised me for a respectable character by the sweet ring of a sovereign at his feet.'
> (p 500)

Nelly Dean, narrator for most of the novel, disapproves of evaluations of economic situation in status terms, as is indicated by her advice

to Catherine Earnshaw and Catherine Linton on the subject of their relationships with Heathcliff (pp 114-5 & 119) and Hareton (pp 289-291) respectively, each 'lower' than themselves.

The economic values which permeate the 'Wuthering Heights' world view are clearly those which were found to guide Emily in her own economic action: money is considered to have positive value only in the context of its capacity to grant independence: once an independent economic situation is secured, concern for the really significant matters of life can proceed unimpeded. It is these matters which constitute the principle subject matter, the predominant themes of the novel: wild passions, love and contempt, revenge and hatred, strength and weakness, the search for unity beyond that attainable in this world, the tempering value of sympathy. Whilst the endeavour to ascertain the influence of Emily's economic action upon the economic cognitions and evaluations in the 'Wuthering Heights' world view is valid, to attempt to trace the predominant themes of the novel to Emily's economic action would be to force a wealth of experience into an irrelevant economic framework. The point is that the consciousness involved in her economic action is not extended more generally through her world view: our own interest in such consciousness must not blind us to the value-reference of the world view of Emily Brontë or her novel.[1] With 'Wuthering Heights', it is indeed more interesting to review (as in the next sections) the predominant attitudes and cognitive styles in its world view, the atypicality of its formative principles, than to trace in the novel the manifestation of the cognitions and evaluations involved in Emily's economic action. This latter has however been of use: (a) in indicating the place of economic considerations in the 'Wuthering Heights' world

[1] For the distinction between value-relevance and value-reference, see above, Chapter 11, p 274

view - not a predominant, but yet a significant place if one considers how crucial are the themes of dependency, inheritance and greed to the working of the plot; (b) in showing how one may, through analysis of plot, description and conversation in the novel, interpret the economic aspects of its world view; and (c) in avoiding the kind of dogmatism that would read into Emily's life and works a 'representative' significance, an 'embodiment' of certain historical class conflicts. (Eagleton, 1975: 11 & 119-120)

Emily Brontë's literary role contacts, including her attempts at communication with her readers, are discussed in the next section, as a preliminary to an account of the atypicality of the 'Wuthering Heights' world view.

(iii) Emily Brontë's Literary Role Contacts

It was argued above[1] that Emily did not see writing in occupational terms. If she was relatively unconcerned with any financial profit that might accrue from her literary work, she was thus less economically obliged that those who depend on writing for their livelihood, or those who write part-time for profit, to take account of the reception she expected from publishers, critics and readers. Similarly she could neglect paying attention to her direct and indirect literary role contacts if her public literary ambitions were low. Yet if this latter contention implies a lack of concern for communication through her work, there is evidence to suggest the contention is false. Miriam Allott indeed argues precisely the opposite: she claims that Emily was influenced by what she thought -

[1] See above, p 292

> '... would be most likely to interest and hold a contemporary audience.'
>
> (1970: 13)

and thus chose the style and content of the popular 'dark tales' in Blackwood's magazine; that Emily was also influenced by Scott, for whom a taste, shared by the Brontë family, was widespread at the time; and that Emily agreed with the popular tradition that the heroine of a novel should be beautiful.

We must beware of assuming, however, that any of these literary forms were adopted by Emily for utilitarian purposes of communication: her choice of a 'dark tale' and beautiful heroines in 'Wuthering Heights' seems more likely to be a continuation of a preference already established in Emily's 'Gondal' poems, with their stark and passionate representations, and the beautiful heroine Augusta Geraldine Almeda. The literary forms available to Emily, through Scott, Blackwood's, and even the Leeds Mercury, certainly suggested themes and styles to her, but our interest is rather in the way she shaped these forms to her own purposes. Whilst writing the Gondal poems, these purposes do not seem to have included communication. Once the secret poems were discovered, though, and Emily was persuaded to have them published, she took account of the anticipated public reception of her work through <u>selection</u> of the poems that she thought would have more universal appeal, and through <u>modification</u> of them by the alteration of Gondal names.

In 'Wuthering Heights' one might expect to find more evidence of attempts at communication; and indeed, as mentioned in Chapter 10,[1] the narrative structure has such complexity, and is sustained with such

[1] See above, Chapter 10, p 246

care, that it encourages the conviction that Emily had a strong interest in claiming realism and authenticity for the universe of the novel. Yet how are we to reconcile this concern for the reader with the fact that the novel shocked so many of those who read it? Emily's largely non-economic motive for writing would certainly grant her a degree of freedom in the choice of themes and styles for her work; but her apparent aim of communication would limit this freedom, if she was aware of the expectations of her literary role contacts. It is indeed a lack of awareness of her readers' expectations, a distance from her role contacts, rather than a lack of concern for communication, that accounts for the atypicality of the 'Wuthering Heights' world view.

(iv) The Atypicality of 'Wuthering Heights'

The reason why 'Wuthering Heights' differs so radically from other novels of the time, why it was so unacceptable to such a large proportion of the Victorian public, and why it made even Emily's sisters shudder at certain aspects of its universe, appears to be that Emily was unaware: (a) that her public did not share certain of her world view assumptions; and (b) that she did not share theirs.

To deal first with the latter: the public would have been disturbed at certain key aspects of their social world not being taken for granted, in particular in Emily's attitude towards status-distinctions. Emily reveals her disapproval of conventional status-distinctions in several ways; some have already been mentioned above in connection with Emily's evaluation of economic situations; others include the following:

Through Nelly Dean, Emily makes a comparison between Hindley and Heathcliff (brought up together, but the latter an orphan found by, and not born of, old Mr. Earnshaw) from which Heathcliff, inferior in status terms, emerges as superior to Hindley in other respects (pp 54-55). Nelly Dean later recounts with obvious disapproval Hindley's tyrannical insistence upon status-distance between the Earnshaw family and Heathcliff (pp 66 & 77).

Through Catherine senior, Emily ridicules Edgar's snobbish attitude towards Heathcliff:

> '(Edgar) looked vexed, and suggested the kitchen as a more suitable place for (Heathcliff). ...
>
> (Catherine:) "Set two tables here, Ellen; one for your master and Miss Isabella, being gentry; the other for Heathcliff and myself, being of the lower orders. Will that please you, dear? Or must I have a fire lighted elsewhere?"'
>
> (p 140)

Catherine junior expresses her belief that it was wrong to invoke income/status objections to Heathcliff's marrying Isabella. (p 322)

Isabella's gentility is seen to be merely a product of circumstance: when moved to an environment which does not possess the trapping of her status, she:

> '... partook of the pervading spirit of neglect which encompassed her. ... So much had circumstances altered their positions, that (Heathcliff) would certainly have struck a stranger as a born and bred gentleman; and his wife as a thorough little slattern!'
>
> (p 218)

Whilst Linton Heathcliff appears more refined to Catherine Linton's eyes at first (p 370), it is the cruder Hareton who is the hero of the final stages of the novel, Linton Heathcliff being portrayed as the most contemptible of the characters.

Nelly Dean's sympathy with Catherine Linton's desire to share her education with Hareton appears to be based on a high evaluation of the pleasure, rather than the prestige, which education brings. (pp 477-8)

The second aspect of the disturbing nature of 'Wuthering Heights' for its readers is more obvious: elements of the 'Wuthering Heights' universe which Emily takes for granted as existing and as worthy of being represented, shock and horrify her readers. Among other matters, such an intense hatred and vindictiveness, and physical violence towards humans and animals, the novel deals with passionate extra-marital relationships, without the author making her condemnation explicit. These gross violations of conventional morality are not even subject to a neat operation of poetic justice; and the commonplace Victorian values of respectability, cleanliness, decency, are severely underplayed in comparison, for example, with Charlotte's novels. This must be a principal reason why we find, when reading the critics of the time, a -

> '... picture of almost complete critical disapproval ...'
> (Watson, 1949: 244)

and, as Allott points out:

> 'The first reviewers of 1847 and 1848 convey, in their perplexity at its apparent moral unorthodoxy and in the urgency of their distress at its violence, the strong impression made upon them by this unusual addition to the output of new novels. They were certainly upset by its deserting the accepted convention which required the author to provide clear moral sign-posts for his reader's guidance.'
> (1970: 17)

Allott here indicates what is perhaps the most significant atypicality of 'Wuthering Heights': its lack of a moralistic 'expressive style'.[1]

[1] The concept of 'expressive style' is introduced in Chapter 10, pp 236-237

It is probably this, more than simply the portrayal of immorality, that shocked the public: one could portray wicked men and events as long as one's condemnation thereof is made clear in the text. In fact 'Wuthering Heights' is not without moral judgements, as we have already seen - but these are left for the reader to interpret rather than being made explicit. Ewbank points out that the very narrative method which Emily uses -

> '... does not allow of any intrusive commment to establish a direct moral rapport between her and her readers ... Nor does it allow for the running commentary by which an omniscient author could give his reader the moral bearings of situations and remind him of the exemplary function of characters and incidents ...'
>
> (1966: 94)

Ewbank strongly emphasises that the absence of explicit moral commentary should not be taken to imply a lack of moral judgements in the novel. In other words, what is missing in the novel is not moral evaluation, but rather a moralistic expressive style; and Emily's readers could probably have accepted much of the content if it had been presented within the framework of such a style.

The fact that Emily chose her particular narrative method is significant: it indicates that she was more concerned with realism than with moralism. The lack of a moralistic expressive style may be explained in two principal ways: Emily was so distanced from her readers that she was unaware of their expectations of moralism in the novel; and/or she was so distanced from them that she was unaware of the divergence between her assumptions and theirs, and thus of the need to justify her point of view. Evidence of Emily's lack of recognition of the atypicality of her world view, and that of her novel, comes from Charlotte:

> '... every page (of 'Wuthering Heights') is surcharged with a sort of moral electricity; and the writer was unconscious of all this - nothing could make her conscious of it.'
> (Charlotte: letter to W S Williams, quoted in Gaskell: 415)

> 'If the auditor of her work, when read in manuscript, shuddered under the grinding influence of natures so relentless and implacable - of spirits so lost and fallen ... Ellis Bell (Emily Brontë) would wonder what was meant, and suspect the complainant of affection.'
> (Quoted in Gaskell: 314)

A similar point could be made concerning Emily's views on status-distinctions: whilst she recognises, as noted above, the importance of status considerations in people's actions, she does not concur with these conventions; yet she does not engage in a lengthy justification of her position on this issue. She is less aware of the divergence between her world view assumptions and those of her readers than is Charlotte[1], and hence does not adopt a self-legitimating expressive style.

### (v) Emily Brontë's Work Situation and Its Influence Upon Her Cognitive and Expressive Styles

The divergence between Emily Brontë and her readers cannot be explained simply in terms of her freedom from economic concerns in her authorship, or by the suggestion that her public literary ambitions were low: the careful realism of 'Wuthering Heights' indicates, as noted above, a considerable concern for communication. To account for the divergence, we must bear in mind the whole complex of factors involved in Emily's 'isolation', and it is here that class elements again appear significant, in particular Emily's work situation.

Emily's relatively isolated work situation may help to explain why she is unaware that her readers will expect a moralistic expressive

[1] See below, p 369 ff

style, why she is able to retain her deviant world view assumptions, why she fails to recognise the atypicality of these assumptions, and thus why she feels no need to adopt a self-legitimating expressive style. It is not just as a public expressive style, however, that moralism is lacking: there is no evidence of a moralistic cognitive style[1] in Emily's private expressions (her Gondal poems, birthday notes, etc.). Thus the seclusion favoured by her work situation may be seen as shielding her from the predominant contemporary cognitive style of moralism, which she would have found difficult to avoid adopting, had she been forced to earn her living in a context less isolated than the Haworth Parsonage.

Turning from the cognitive style that is absent in Emily Brontë to one that is apparent, it may be suggested that Emily's isolated work situation is partly responsible for a striking feature of the 'Wuthering Heights' world view, i.e. an expressive style characterised by:- rather stark, 'extreme' portrayals of individuals; a concentration on external features; the implication of a wealth of 'background'[2] in the characters; dimly illuminated ambiguities; a tendency towards melodrama.[3] Some of these characteristics are present even in the first paragraph of the novel, where we have the first description of Heathcliff:

> '... I beheld his black eyes withdraw so suspiciously under their brows as I rode up, and ... his fingers sheltered themselves, with a jealous resolution, still further in his waistcoat ...'
>
> (p 1)

1 For the distinction between expressive and cognitive style, see above, Chapter 10, p 236

2 See Auerbach, 1953: 12

3 'Life presented itself violently and dramatically to her, ... she saw life in unusually bare, dramatic lines. ... Cut off from the inner aspect, her concentration upon the outside view of events became the more intense, and so unconsciously she went further in dramatic emphasis than she realised.'
(Willis, 1963: 117-8)

This expressive style, clearly apparent in 'Wuthering Heights', is even more strongly evident in Emily's 'Gondal' poems, which are the remnants of an imaginary world in which, it seems, Emily spent much of her time. It may thus be suggested that this style is not confined to Emily's public literary expressions, but is a cognitive style of relatively wide extension through her world view. She would doubtless have written a very different book had she not been so deeply involved in her Gondal epic for so long: she writes in her birthday note of 1845 (only three years before her death and a year before completing 'Wuthering Heights'):

> 'The Gondals still flourish bright as ever. I am at present writing a work on the First War.'
> (Quoted by Willis, 1963: 99)

It is difficult to conceive of the Gondal fantasy having such a grip on her, had she been forced, as was Charlotte, to gain employment for a considerable length of time away from Haworth. What we may call the 'Gondal' cognitive style could survive because of Emily's work situation, which allowed time for fantasy, and did not enforce too prolonged a contact with a conventional social world that might have engendered a conflicting cognitive style. Support is given to this hypothesis by a comparison with Charlotte, who, as we shall see[1], found it very difficult not to retreat to her imaginary world of 'Angria', but nonetheless was forced to break out of its grasp through her prolonged absences in employment away from Haworth.

Yet it is unlikely that the Gondal cognitive style was confined to Emily's literary universe: she may well have viewed those around her in the light of a similar cognitive style, a style that might have broken down under the pressure of wider social contacts, and is thus

[1] See below, pp 333-334

again maintained through the isolation provided by her work situation. Charlotte's perceptive comment on this issue is enlightening:

> 'I am bound to avow that she had scarcely more practical knowledge of the peasantry amongst whom she lived than a nun has of the country people that pass her convent gates. My sister's disposition was not naturally gregarious; circumstances favoured and fostered her tendency to seclusion: ... Though her feeling for the people round her was benevolent, intercourse with them she never sought, nor, with very few exceptions, ever experienced; ... what her mind had gathered of the real concerning them, was too exclusively confined to those tragic and terrible traits, of which, in listening to the secret annals of every rude vicinage, the memory is sometimes compelled to receive the impress.'
>
> (Quoted by Gaskell: 314, my emphasis)

In terms of Chapter 5, then,[1] Emily's work situation experience allowed the retention of the Gondal cognitive style, which might otherwise have been excluded had she undergone more prolonged experience of the restrictive situations in which her sisters had to work. More particularly, in terms of Chapter 7, Emily's work situation involved a relative lack of contact[2] with competing cognitive styles, or with divergent cognitions, and thus the principles of her Gondal cognitive style remained unchallenged. None of this is to suggest that Emily's work situation 'determined' her world view: her work situation, offering relative social independence and seclusion, was consciously chosen from those available to her, probably for the precise reason of its lack of disruptive influence upon her world view.

Finally in this section, it is interesting to compare the expressive style of 'Wuthering Heights' and that of Dostoievsky's 'The Idiot'.

1 See above, Chapter 5, p 121

2 '... a narrow set of class contacts and few contacts outside the sphere of class ...' - Chapter 7, above, p 158

The latter contrasts strongly with the former in having been written in haste for serialisation and in order to earn subsistence and to pay off debts. (Magarshack, 1955: 7ff) An effect of urgency is achieved through melodrama: one is kept on edge at all times, and particularly at the ends of chapters, to know what will happen next. The characters, too, appear chosen for sensationalism, and tend to lack the 'background' quality of those in 'Wuthering Heights'. In this latter, by contrast, the effect is unhurried, the plurality of narrators and the leaping through time tending to break up any long-sustained tension effect of the type that engenders compulsive further reading. The characters, nonetheless stark and extreme, and just as much part of a conception that may broadly be termed melodramatic, still convey a greater sense of realism - not only through the setting and reminders of day-to-day existence, but through the implied depth of background and ambiguity already noted above. They appear to belong more to an intensely felt metaphysical realm than the characters in 'The Idiot', who seem to have been produced as much for arousing the public's sensations as for expressing those of the author. Whatever the reason for the sensationalism of 'The Idiot', it does abound with explicit effusions of emotion, compared with 'Wuthering Heights', where, as Ewbank points out, Emily achieves her effect -

> '... by implying emotion rather than flooding her lines with it ...'
>
> (1966: 151)

This brief comparison of 'Wuthering Heights' with 'The Idiot' does suggest that the 'Gondal' cognitive style, which constitutes a major formative principle of Emily's literary expressions, is protected from incorporation into a plot-sensation form in her novel, through her writing thereof being seen in chiefly non-economic terms. The

influence of economic action upon literary form is particularly clear in this comparison, where the expressive styles are superficially so similar.

(vi) Conclusion on the Study of Emily Brontë

In the first five sections of this chapter we have attempted to trace the influence of Emily Brontë's economic action and work situation upon her world view and that of her novel. Emily's economic action was seen to influence the cognitive and evaluative content of 'Wuthering Heights', particularly in the lack of portrayal of work, in the emphasis on economic dependence and in the attitudes of the characters towards money. More interestingly, the atypicality of the 'Wuthering Heights' world view was considered, particularly with respect to the treatment of status conventions and unorthodox morality. The lack of a moralistic or even self-legitimating expressive style was thought particularly significant. It was suggested that Emily's deviant attitudes, and cognitive and expressive styles, were fostered by her relatively isolated work situation, which was also partly responsible for her 'Gondal' cognitive style. This latter was distinguished from sensational melodrama, a style that might have been encouraged had Emily's writing been economically motivated.

Paucity of evidence means that much of the research on Emily Brontë's life and thoughtmust remain tentative. We have however indicated how the concepts and approaches developed in previous chapters may suggest interesting hypotheses about Emily Brontë and her novel. In particular, the concepts of work situation and of cognitive and expressive style have proved illuminating. In the rest of this

chapter, several of the hypotheses concerning Emily Brontë are found to be useful in providing points of comparison with our principal case study - a study of the life and works of Charlotte Brontë.

## (vii) Charlotte Brontë's Economic Action

In this section, the well-known features of Charlotte Brontë's biography will be reviewed in the light of an emphasis upon her economic action, conceived in terms of sociological rationality as in the schema outlined in Chapter 5.[1] Charlotte's economic ends are best understood in relation to her values: in particular, mental liberty (in the sense of sufficient leisure for solitary reflection):

> 'I could like to feel some mental liberty. I could like this weight of restraint to be taken off.'
> (Charlotte: letter to Emily, July 1839, quoted in Gaskell: 158);

duty:

> 'She was too apt to consider, that allowing herself a holiday was a dereliction of duty ...'
> (Gaskell: 124)

> '(The sisters) felt that it was their duty to relieve their father of the burden of their support, ... and, naturally, the lot devolved upon the elder ones to find some occupation which would enable them to do this.'
> (Gaskell: 131)

> 'She thought much of her duty, and had loftier and clearer notions of it than most people, and held fast to them with more success.'
> (Mary Taylor on Charlotte, quoted in Gaskell: 525);

resignation/forebearance:

> '... the poor are born to labour, and the dependent to endure.'
> (Charlotte: letter, July 1839, quoted in Gaskell: 157)

With such values in mind, Charlotte was less attracted by the material possessions and social status that wealthy economic situations attain, than by the prospect of economic independence:

[1] See above, Chapter 5, p 121

'Did I not once say you ought to be thankful for your independence?', she writes to Ellen Nussey, July 1835 (quoted in Gaskell: 120). Economic independence would bring mental liberty from occupational concerns. Over seven years later, after the death of her Aunt Branwell, she is able to hope that the railway shares, bought with her inheritance, will 'provide a small competency for life'. (Lane 1969: 258) But in 1835 her sense of duty impelled her to seek employment, and thus to earn enough to avoid being a burden upon others. (Gaskell: 120)

The means available to Charlotte to maintain or improve her economic situation were the same as for Emily: writing, teaching as a governess, teaching in a school, marriage, inheritance, dependence upon her family. Clearly, writing was the most attractive of these possibilities for Charlotte: to be a writer had been her dream since childhood. At first, however, writing did not seem feasible to her as a form of economic action:

> '... she herself had hardly yet ventured to contemplate (publication) as a practical step ...'
> (Willis, 1963: 101)

Charlotte was thus left with the other, less attractive, possibilities.

She certainly had few illusions about her marital prospects:

> '... it is an imbecility, which I reject with contempt, for women, who have neither fortune nor beauty, to make marriage the principal object of their wishes and hopes, and the aim of all their actions; ... they had better be quiet, and think of other things than wedlock.'
> (Charlotte: letter to Ellen Nussey, April 1843, quoted in Gaskell: 230)

Although she received several proposals, these she rejected on emotional rather than practical grounds: it seems that she did not see marriage as a step to economic advancement. Increasingly she became convinced she would 'never marry at all' (Gaskell: 176), and claimed that she had fully resigned herself to her fate as an 'old maid'. (Gaskell: 161) Whatever the validity of this claim, her views on marriage in economic

terms seem clear; and with her sense of duty insisting on her not being a burden, she would be likely even when married to expect to earn some independent income.

Her sense of duty is also responsible for her rejecting dependence upon her father (Gaskell: 131). The rector's small incumbancy made it impracticable for all three sisters to stay at home, and Charlotte, as the oldest, felt particularly obliged to leave home to earn her living - until some years later, when her conscience demanded the opposite, i.e. that she remain at home to tend the sick or comfort her family at the time of the Branwell scandal. (Gaskell: 287)

There were no great prospects of inheritance for Charlotte; but when Aunt Branwell died in 1842, the legacy was considered useful for the furtherance of the sisters' plan to start their own school; and it was later thought to be a worthwhile small investment. For several years, though, Charlotte had to seek employment, and was thus left with the two occupations most obviously open to women of her background: governess or school teacher:

> '... teaching seemed to her at this time, as it does to most women at all times, the only way of earning an independent livelihood.'
> (Gaskell: 151-2)

Charlotte taught for a few years at Miss Wooler's school, which she had previously attended as a pupil; but eventually the monotony, her separation from home and sisters, and her dislike for teaching itself, brought her to such a nervous condition, that a doctor advised her to leave. (Gaskell: 149) Soon afterwards she obtained a post as a governess, but the constant demand upon her time, not allowing her any period of freedom per day, the strain of looking after unruly children with whom she had but little sympathy, and the isolated and inferior social position of the governess within the Victorian family, caused her so

much anxiety that she left within two or three months. (Gaskell: 158)

However, little more than a year later, she felt obliged once more to find a congenial post:

> 'Much as she disliked the life of a private governess, it was her duty to relieve her father of the burden of her support, and this was the only way open to her. So she set to advertising and inquiring with fresh vigour.'
>
> (Gaskell: 180)

Although she obtained a post in a more congenial family this time, she writes to her friend Ellen:

> '... no one but myself can tell how hard a governess's work is to me ... how utterly averse my whole mind and nature are for the employment.'
>
> (Gaskell: 184)

Mrs Gaskell herself describes the difficulty of such a situation for Charlotte:

> '... as her definite acquirements were few, she had to eke them out by employing her leisure time in needlework; and altogether her position was that of a 'bonne' or nursery governess, liable to repeated and never-ending calls upon her time. This description of uncertain, yet perpetual employment, subject to the exercise of another person's will at all hours of the day, was peculiarly trying to one whose life at home had been full of abundant leisure.'
>
> (Gaskell: 182)

Charlotte's psychic difficulties in this situation, together with Anne's poor health, made her think more seriously than before of a plan they had previously conceived, of setting up a school of their own:

> 'To have a school, was to have some portion of daily leisure, uncontrolled but by her own sense of duty; it was for the three sisters, loving each other with so passionate an affection, to be together under one roof, and yet earning their own subsistence;'
>
> (Gaskell: 190)

Charlotte obtained a promise of a loan from her Aunt Branwell for this purpose, but gradually became convinced that, with the large number of schools competing for pupils, it was unlikely that their venture would

succeed, unless they themselves had attained higher standards of education. She thus persuaded her aunt to loan them the money for an alternative plan to further their education abroad, in Brussels. She was convinced that this preparation would enable them to make a success of the school project. (Gaskell: 191-3) Thus in less than a year after taking up her second, and last, position as a governess, Charlotte had left it and had set off for Brussels with Emily. About nine months later they returned from Brussels at Aunt Branwell's death, but Charlotte returned to continue the considerable educational progress she had been making, financing her studies and keep out of earnings as an English teacher in the school. (Gaskell: 226) Charlotte spent most of this year (1843) in Brussels, but towards the end she returned to Haworth, her German having progressed sufficiently, her attachment to M. Heger having progressed perhaps too deeply (at the expense of her relationship with Mme. Heger), and her father's blindness having progressed dangerously. (Lane, 1969: 176-7) She had, of course, besides all this, been suffering as usual when away from her home and sisters.

It seemed now that the time was ripe for them to attempt to actualise their plan of setting up their own school, and thereby to gain the independence of working for themselves, with the concomitant greater 'mental liberty' and, of course, the great advantage of the three sisters staying together; they would indeed be remaining at Haworth, since they thought of converting part of the parsonage. There was however no reply to the cards they had printed advertising the school, and so this one practical hope of independently earning their living was abandoned. (Gaskell: 249) Charlotte's experience of working away from home had by now led her to value a more active life than at Haworth, but her father's deteriorating eyesight, and Branwell's increasing degeneracy, made her feel that it was now her duty to stay at home. (Gaskell: 287)

All this time the dream of literary success, though somewhat unrealistic, must have been at the back of her mind, since, as soon as she had come across Emily's poems in the Autumn of 1845, she was very quick to suggest publication, and to go about the necessary arrangements, negotiations, etc., with great zeal. (Gaskell: 264-8) Their book of poems, however, was a complete failure, and the sisters had to bear the cost of publication. (Willis, 1963: 101) During the negotiations, however, they had decided that they would each complete a prose tale for publication. (Lane, 1969: 197) While Emily's and Anne's efforts were accepted, Charlotte's 'The Professor' went the rounds of the publishers without success; but, even while this failure was becoming apparent, Charlotte began another work, more suited perhaps to public taste: 'Jane Eyre'. (Gaskell: 283) This was eventually accepted by Smith and Elder, a firm of publishers who had shown some interest in 'The Professor', and who had expressed interest in any future work she might write in three volumes and of more vivid interest. (Gaskell: 297) 'Jane Eyre' was published very swiftly, even before the novels of Emily and Anne, and was very soon a great success. 'Shirley' and 'Villette' followed at Charlotte's own rate of writing, which could not be forced. Thus she writes to her publishers at the end of 1851:

> 'It is not at all likely that my book will be ready at the time you mention. If my health is spared, I shall get on with it as fast as is consistent with its being done, if not well, yet as well as I can do it. Not one whit faster. When the mood leaves me ... I put by the MS. and wait till it comes back again. God knows, I sometimes have to wait long - very long it seems to me.'
>
> (quoted in Gaskell: 458)

It is interesting to try to establish the motivation for Charlotte's continuing authorship. Whilst economic motives may have been significant, it is unlikely that they were predominant: she never haggled with her publishers about remuneration, and indeed her novels, though most successful,

never made her wealthy. (Lane, 1969: 258) Her earnings did, however, enable her to make some improvements to the parsonage, in terms of furniture etc. (Gaskell: 504), and granted her economic independence from occupational concerns - yet, after the deaths of Emily and Anne, she would in any case have neither needed, nor been able, to work away from Haworth: her father could have supported her, and she felt obliged to stay at home and look after him as well as carry out other 'home duties'. (Gaskell: 382) It thus seems likely that Charlotte at first saw authorship as a faint possibility of augmenting the family income, and that, after the success of 'Jane Eyre', she continued to regard the money from the novels as useful. Her original attempts at publication, however, are more likely to have been oriented towards literary 'success'[1] than wealth or fame; and the desire for the maintenance of this success must have contributed to her continued authorship. She also felt it was a duty to use the 'faculty of imagination', seen as a gift from God, to the best of her ability. (Gaskell: 369) For example, in a letter to Mr Smith her publisher, Charlotte suggests that Thackeray will have to put more effort into the writing of 'Esmond' if the second and third volumes are to be a 'true success':

> '... I would do my best. Mr Thackeray is easy and indolent, and seldom cares to do his best.'
> (February 1852, quoted in Gaskell: 461-3)

Fame certainly seems highly unlikely to have been a goal of Charlotte's writing: Mrs. Gaskell points out how Charlotte had felt a strong temptation to meet some of her publisher's literary friends -

> '... but her resolution to remain unknown induced her firmly to put it aside.'
> (Gaskell: 329)

[1] In the sense of the public recognition of literary merit: see above, Chapter 8, p 182

Charlotte indeed employed every means to preserve her anonymity, and was most disturbed at the public discovery of her 'secret, so jealously preserved.' (Gaskell: 373)

One important reason for Charlotte's continuing authorship was the attempt to allay the morbid depressions of loneliness through intense activity, the activity of the imagination being particularly suitable. This orientation to her work was certainly present in the writing of 'Villette' (Gaskell: 416-7), but even more so towards the end of 'Shirley', when intense involvement in her work helped her to stop dwelling on the recent deaths in her family:

> '... the last volume, I cannot deny, was composed in the eager, restless endeavour to combat mental sufferings that were scarcely tolerable.'
> (Charlotte: letter, 5 September 1850, quoted in Gaskell: 413)

Shortly after the completion of 'Villette', Charlotte received her fourth proposal of marriage, from Mr Nicholls, her father's curate. This offer she was inclined to reject for the same reasons that she had rejected the previous ones: she was neither in love, nor even found her suitor particularly congenial. (Lane, 1969: 288) Charlotte may originally have had status objections to an alliance with Mr Nicholls:

> 'She was prejudiced against him, she despised the general run of curates, and his stipend was £100 a year.'
> (Lane, 1969: 200);

but later she found herself out of sympathy with her father's emphasis on status distinctions:

> '... he says the match would be a degradation, that I should be throwing myself away; that he expects me, if I marry at all, to do very differently; in short, his manner of viewing the subject is, on the whole, far from being one with which I can sympathise.'
> (Charlotte: letter to Ellen Nussey, January 1853, quoted in Lane, 1969: 287)

Nevertheless, even when Charlotte felt less inclined to reject Mr Nicholls, she found it difficult to overcome her feeling of duty to respect her father's wishes. (Lane, 1969: 297) Eventually, however, her loneliness, her perception of Mr Nicholls' extreme devotion to her, and a growing affection for him through clandestine correspondence and meetings arranged through his persistence, altered Charlotte's view of the situation, and she attempted to persuade her father to adopt a different attitude towards the matter. (Lane, 1969: 298) Whilst Charlotte was not swayed by material advantages or disadvantages in this affair, her father it seems may have reckoned otherwise:

> 'The new curate ... was not giving satisfaction. Mr Brontë had grown accustomed to the method and thoroughness of Mr Nicholls's ministry, and everything seemed troublesome now that he was gone. If he married Charlotte, he could come back to Haworth ... The store-room could be turned into a study, and out of his hundred a year Mr Nicholls would contribute to the household. Mr Brontë began to perceive that the marriage might even have its practical advantage.'
>
> (Lane, 1969: 299)

After her marriage, Charlotte had but little time to herself:

> 'I really seem to have had scarcely a spare moment since (the wedding) ... my time is not my own now;'
> (Charlote: letter quoted in Gaskell: 518);

but she seemed generally happy with the extra household and philanthropic duties she performed. (Gaskell: 519) She appears to have been very satisfied with her husband, and, for instance, found his meriting the character of -

> '... a consistent Christian and a kind gentleman ... better than to earn either wealth, or fame, or power.'
> (Charlotte: letter quoted in Gaskell: 518)

Even now that she was so busy, she found time to begin a fifth novel, 'Emma'. (Lane, 1969: 304) This novel was of course never completed, her married bliss being cut short after only nine months by her death.

(viii) The Approach to Charlotte Brontë's Novels

In the analysis of Charlotte Brontë's novels, we are attempting to trace the influence of Charlotte's own world view upon the world views of her literary expressions, taking into account her conceptions of her literary role. In turn, her own world view is considered to be in certain ways developed from her 'class',[1] in particular from the consciousness involved in her economic action and work situation. To some extent the novels are themselves taken as documents of Charlotte's world view, as with Emily and 'Wuthering Heights' in the previous chapter; but where this is the case, we generally have more evidence than with Emily to support a biographical interpretation: for instance, Charlotte's letters often evince values[2] which are to be found in her novels; or her friends may list as her own concerns[3] those that we find in her literary works. In several cases, too, elements of the novel's plot are taken from Charlotte's own experience: in particular, in 'The Professor' and 'Villette', her life in Brussels. Some of the most interesting conclusions of the research, however, are reached where aspects of the novel's world view cannot be taken to be synonymous, in a straightforward manner, with Charlotte's own world view: i.e., especially with regard to expressive styles and changing formative principles in the novels.

The following analysis centres on an examination of two predominant themes that run throughout Charlotte's novels: i.e., the related themes of work and independence. In all her novels work is to some extent the subject-matter, at least in terms of making progress in earning one's living; and both economic independence and social independence (the

1 As defined in Chapters 5 and 7 above; see particularly Chapter 5, p 120

2 E.g., 'independence' - see above, p 316

3 E.g., 'duty' - see above, p 315

latter in terms of freedom from obligations to others, freedom to be alone, etc.) are recurrently important concerns in the novels. Another predominant theme that we must recognise, but shall deal with in less depth, is that of romantic love. Our selective approach is consistent with the recognition of the value-reference[1] of the novels, whilst concentrating our research on those aspects most relevant to our theoretical concerns. We shall thus now explore the themes of work and independence through Charlotte's four novels, indicating consistencies and variations in their treatment.

(ix) 'The Professor'

The most important theme which runs through 'The Professor' is that of gaining a 'competence' (i.e. economic independence):

> 'A competency was what I wanted; a competency it was now my aim and resolve to secure;' (p 254).

With a few temporary setbacks, the hero, William Crimsworth, strong in aspirations:

> 'My hopes to win and possess, my resolutions to work and rise,' (p 266),

makes gradual progress, is later joined in his economic struggle by the heroine, whom he marries, and together they eventually come within sight of their goal:

> 'If we only had good health and tolerable success, we might ... in time realise an independency; and that, perhaps, before we were too old to enjoy it;' (p 350).

The hero had begun his story with the need to earn a living, having rejected occupational and matrimonial help from his aristocratic relations; his account concludes in retired success. In between we trace his career, in which the history of the hero's growth in value becomes the history of his increased income and possessions. (e.g. p 246)

[1] See above, Chapter 11, p 274

Thus the subject-matter of the novel is predominantly work; and increasingly the motivation for the work is progress towards economic independence. The values that are most strongly and persistently set forth in the novel are similarly related to economic affairs, and may be summed up as an ethic of strict economic discipline. Thus the hero is described in the following terms:

> '... my accounts with my landlady were always straight. I had hired small lodgings, which I contrived to pay for out of a slender fund - the accumulated savings of my Eton pocket-money; for as it had ever been abhorrent to my nature to ask pecuniary assistance, I had early acquired habits of self-denying economy;' (p 25).

Such an account of the hero is paralleled in many places by a picture of the heroine even more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of capitalism:

> '... possessed ... of at least two good points, viz., perseverance and a sense of duty;' (p 182)
>
> 'personification of discretion and forethought, of diligence and perserverance, of self-denial and self-control ... model of truth and honour, of independence and conscientiousness -' (p 238)
>
> '... the dignity of her poverty, the pride of order, the fastidious care of conservatism, obvious in the arrangement and economy of her little home; I was sure she would not suffer herself to be excused paying her debts;' (p 251)
>
> 'I knew she was not one who could live quiescent and inactive, or even comparatively inactive. Duties she must have to fulfil, and important duties; work to do - and exciting, absorbing, profitable work;' (p 350)

The history and intentions of the heroine parallel those of the hero: she takes up lace-mending to earn enough money so that she can be educated - education being seen as the means by which a woman can rise in the world - with the eventual aim of becoming a governess or school-teacher.

Throughout the novel, the antithesis to the ethic of earning one's way to independence is seen as personal dependence, which is rejected in various forms. William Crimsworth finds it very difficult to ask

M. Vandenhuten for help, even though William has promised him that he will not hesitate in seeking assitance: William had saved the life of M. Vandenhuten's son. Eventually he asks, not for financial help, but for a recommendation. (pp 278-9) Marrying into wealth as a means of attaining the desired economic independence is despised - perhaps partly because it would still involve some kind of dependence, and of course also because it would go against the author's strongly held conviction of marriage for love:

> '"your only chance of getting a competency lies in marrying a rich widow, or running away with an heiress."
> "I leave such shifts to be put in practice by those who devise them," said I, rising.' (p 48)

Not only does the author spurn the notion of a man marrying for economic independence: even a woman's reliance upon her husband's earnings is soundly rejected, as in the words of Frances Henri, the heroine, to William:

> '... my efforts to get on will be as unrestrained as yours ... I must be no incumbrance to you - no burden in any way. ... Think of my marrying you to be kept by you, Monsieur! I could not do it;'
> (pp 317-8)

Despite the emphasis upon economic advancement, the novel reflects Charlotte's evaluation of what an improved economic situation would attain: she lacks interest in achieving great wealth, but values highly the prospect of a moderate competency that would allow her to stop working for a living:

> '... we both agreed that, as Mammon was not our master, nor his service that in which we desired to spend our lives; as our desires were temperate, and our habits unostentatious, we had now abundance to live on - '
> (p 362).

In addition to the ultimate goal of economic independence, there is evidence in the novel of a high evaluation of social independence, in the sense of freedom from obligations to others, excepting those duties that are freely chosen or recognised, or those which one contracts to

fulfil, within set time limits (so as not to absorb all one's free time), and in which one is responsible for, rather than supervised in, the performance. This value of social independence is primarily concerned with the work situation ; and it is largely the desire for such independence in her work that led Charlotte herself to adopt, as the most favoured means of earning her living, the school project.[1] Both social independence, as a principal evaluative criterion of her work situation, and the school project, as the chosen means of economic action, are centrally involved in the novel, the value being apparent throughout, and the means being eventually selected as the most suitable form of economic action.

When the goal of the hero and heroine is reached, and they retire on their competency in England, the absence of the work theme seems to leave something of a void. The work ethic is kept partially alive through charity duties, but the principal reasons for work, economic advancement and occupying the mind, have disappeared in the state of married bliss, leaving an impression of emptiness. Given that the principal momentum of the novel is supplied by the work theme, however, Charlotte attempts to provide continuation of this theme, and to breathe some life into the otherwise rather empty heaven, through indications of the future of Victor, the son of the hero and heroine. Victor is to be banished from this blissful existence to Eton, where he will be disciplined through salutory suffering to face the difficulties of this world, and emerge able to achieve independently the 'glory of success'. (p 374)

[1] See above, pp 318-319

The above examination of the predominant attitudes in the world view of 'The Professor', the principal subject-matter portrayed and evaluations evinced, shows that there is a clear consistency between the world view of Charlotte as outlined in the introductory biographical section of this chapter, and the world view of her first novel. Such a demonstration of consistency, however, still leaves unanswered the question why the themes of work and independence should claim such a prominent position in Charlotte's world view. One might argue that these themes are merely elements of an early Victorian world view,[1] but this would fail to explain the particular strength of these themes in Charlotte's world view, especially in comparison with her sister Emily. It also neglects the fact that the typical woman novelist of the 1840s did not write about work and independence, but about:

> '... the woman as an influence on others within her domestic and social circle.'
> (Ewbank, 1966: 41)

'The Professor' is written as the autobiography of a man working his way through life, and is thus highly atypical as a novel by a woman writer of the period. Charlotte, whose economic situation did not allow her to remain within the domestic circle, was able to write with the wider experience that her working life had given her. Work and independence are furthermore particularly significant in Charlotte's world view, because the type of work (especially in terms of features of the work situation) available to her threatens some of her basic values, especially that of social independence. In terms of Chapter 7, Charlotte's work situation is particularly salient for her because of her negative evaluation thereof[2],

[1] E.g. Charlotte's emphasis upon independence may be seen as part of a wider Victorian ethos of self-help - see Laurenson, 1969: 316.

[2] See above, Chapter 7, p 169

and this negative evaluation makes her more conscious of the values relevant to her work situation, of the economic action conditions that restrict the available work situations, and of the ideal (independent) economic situation that would avoid the need to undertake such work. Charlotte Brontë thus provides an excellent example of the development of consciousness through work situation experience. The remainder of this section will be devoted to an analysis of certain key developments of Charlotte's consciousness in relation to her economic action and work situation.

Charlotte's being forced to take a position in which she felt unnecessarily controlled, in which she was unable to exercise responsibility within her own sphere of competence, made her particularly sensitive to the problems of those of her contemporary fellow-women who were similarly situated. Charlotte became acutely aware of the severely limited means of economic action available to such women, and this awareness may have been extended to the moderate 'feminism' that is evident in her novels. In 'The Professor', Charlotte is clearly behind Frances' aim to rise in the world and earn her living possibly outside the sphere commonly reserved for the conventional 'decorous female'. Charlotte thus puts the opinion she is fighting against into the mouth of that unappealing character, Mme. Reuter:

> '... ambition, literary ambition especially, is not a feeling to be cherished in the mind of a woman;' (p 212)

A more significant development of Charlotte's consciousness is that of the work ethic, which is particularly evident in 'The Professor' as witnessed by many of the above quotations. The work ethic itself is certainly a development beyond a mere moral injunction to earn one's living. The hypothesis we suggest is that Charlotte's strong work ethic is evolved in order to be a harsh master over her desires for time to

contemplate and to escape into her fantasy world: out of the economic necessity, that forces her to undertake work that denies her mental liberty, she seems to have created a virtue. It may even be suggested that the stronger the necessity to work, and the stronger the temptation not to, the more firmly will a work ethic be adopted and maintained. The work ethic thus functions for Charlotte as a 'promotion'[1] that makes the necessity of earning a living easier. It could thus be abandoned as soon as economic independence was achieved - and indeed we have noted the eclipse of the work ethic in the blissful relatively inactive finale of 'The Professor'. Yet the work ethic, once adopted, is not so easily abandoned: there is an impression of emptiness and stagnation at the end of 'The Professor'; and an attempt is therefore made to rekindle the work ethic through stressing the discipline needed for its inculcation into Victor. The utilitarian adoption of the work ethic thus seems to have ritualised the means (working hard for a living) of gaining subsistence and of eventually attaining the end (economic independence) into an end in itself, so that the original goal seems somewhat emptied of its full value. The emphasis upon work, if we failed to understand its ritualistic quality, would seem strangely out of place in Charlotte Brontë, who originally worked for a living only because she had to, and whose ultimate dream was to gain enough to stop working.

The transformation of the necessity for hard work into a value in its own right is only part of a wider extension to related values, such as those that have been mentioned in quotations above: punctuality, debt-paying, perseverence, discretion, forethought, diligence, self-denial, self-control, conscientiousness, 'reason', pride of order, etc. These values were certainly 'available' to Charlotte in the

[1] See above, Chapter 3, p 80. The concept of 'promotion' was indeed originally devised in attempting to account for the strength of Charlotte Brontë's work ethic.

prevailing 'social character'[1] of her time, and she probably adopted them through a process of elective affinity[2]; but the strength of emphasis that she places on these values indicates, that either they have particular utility for her (e.g. her work situation when a governess required great self-restraint, and a concentration upon these values may have made self-restraint easier), or that she is highly committed[3] to them as extensions[4] of her work ethic and, ultimately, through the salience of her economic action in disagreeable work situations.

In 'The Professor' the work ethic becomes the predominant theme and appears to restrict the development of alternative themes, in particular that of romantic love. With the hero and heroine so highly economically motivated, their romantic relationship must of necessity take a subsidiary place, and indeed at times it is conceived in the light of a business partnership:

> '... years of bustle, action, unslacked endeavour; years in which I and my wife, having launched ourselves in the full career of progress ... scarcely knew repose, were strangers to amusement, never thought of indulgence, and yet, as our course ran side by side, as we marched hand in hand, we neither murmured, repented, nor faltered.' (p 351)

Even the hero's desire to marry the heroine is couched within a vocabulary of motive that is consistent with an overall perspective of acquisition:

> '... a strong desire to do more, earn more, be more, possess more; and in the increased possessions ... to include ... the wife I inwardly vowed to win.' (p 246)

In 'The Professor', then, we find a consistent general content acting as a restrictive formative principle, excluding or modifying the treatment of alternative themes.[5]

1 See Williams, 1965: 63

2 See above, Chapter 7, p 172

3 See above, Chapter 4, p 92

4 See above, Chapter 3, p 81

5 See above, Chapter 10, p 235

Any account of formative principles in 'The Professor' must recognise the role played by a certain self-conscious 'realism' in the novel, i.e. the realistic expressive style with which Charlotte deals with the subject-matter of economic action. The author makes explicit her commitment to realism in the novel:

> 'Novelists should never allow themselves to weary of the study of real life. If they observed this duty conscientiously, they would give us fewer pictures chequered with vivid contrasts of light and shade; they would seldom elevate their heroes and heroines to the heights of rapture - still seldomer sink them to the depths of despair;'
> (p 223)

> 'My narrative is not exciting, and, above all, not marvellous;'
> (p 14).

Thus the developments in the novel, given the extreme conscientiousness of the hero and heroine, are generally plausible and probable, rather than unexpected and unlikely; and the lovers are treated, perhaps idealistically, but certainly not as mysterious demigods as in Emily's works and in Charlotte's former myths of 'Angria'. Charlotte's childhood fantasies around the kingdom of Angria had kept a grip on her imagination until the age of 25, when she -

> '... realising the strength of the obsession and its dangers, broke out of it with anguish, and not before it had left its permanent, and valuable mark'.
> (Lane, 1969: 117)

Charlotte found it extraordinarily difficult to give up her fantasy life, which must have seemed the only escape open to her from the constriction and social dependence involved in her work situation as teacher or governess. Yet she abandoned her 'Angria' cognitive style, probably for two reasons: firstly, her work, when in employment away from Haworth, involved so much of her time that little remained for contemplation in the cognitive style of her Angrianfantasy - this is a case of exclusion, rather than extension, of consciousness. Mrs Gaskell points out the contrast between her home life and her life as a governess: at home, her abundant leisure -

> '... made it possible for her to go through long and deep histories of feeling and imagination, ... The habit of 'making out' ... had become a part of her nature. Yet all exercise of her strongest and most characteristic faculties was now out of the question. She could not (as while she was as Miss Wooler's) feel amidst the occupations of the day, that when evening came she might employ herself in more congenial ways.'
> (Gaskell: 182-3)

Thus Mrs Gaskell contrasts Charlotte's position as a teacher at Miss Wooler's school with her later posts as governess; yet, even at Miss Wooler's, Charlotte had felt the 'dangers' (as Lane puts it) of her fantasy existence, i.e. the danger that it would detract from the proper performance of her duties and make it more difficult for her to resign herself to her situation:

> 'If you knew my thoughts, the dreams that absorb me,
> and the fiery imagination that at times eats me up,
> and makes me feel society, as it is, wretchedly insipid,
> you would pity and I dare say despise me.'
> (Charlotte: letter to Ellen Nussey, May 10th 1836,
> quoted in Gaskell: 126)

We should thus suggest that the second reason for Charlotte abandoning her 'Angria' cognitive style was in order to develop, as a 'promotion', a cognitive style more suited to her necessity to work, i.e. realism. Yet, although she managed to abandon Angria, she did not manage to erase its cognitive style, as we shall see in her other novels. In 'The Professor', however, it is realism that holds sway, along with a firm moralism, a preaching, self-righteous expressive style that would not allow inconsistencies and thus excludes certain of Charlotte's values that are liberated in the less constricting expressive styles and formative principles of her other novels.

'Realism' as a formative principle in 'The Professor' is not merely Charlotte's expression of a certain cognitive style: it implies in addition a definite restriction of content, beyond the simple exclusion of those cognitions and evaluations that are untenable within a realistic

cognitive style. As Barthes points out[1], realism may be taken to apply to either the form or the content of presentation. For Charlotte, 'reality' seems to be largely synonymous with work: the 'unreality' of Angria had been rejected, because of the pressing exigencies of 'reality' (in her work situation), and was replaced by a new realistic cognitive style which was, of course, to concentrate on the very 'reality' (the real necessity of earning a living) which had led her to abandon Angria in the first place. We thus see the link between the predominant themes and expressive style of 'The Professor'.

We have already noted that 'The Professor' is not to be taken as representing the whole of Charlotte's world view: through its rigid formative principles, its narrow criteria of selection, 'The Professor' achieves greater consistency of world view than any of Charlotte's other novels. The influence of Charlotte's literary role upon this world view is difficult to ascertain: on the one hand, we find warnings to the reader to expect realism, with for example a suitable mixture of the pleasant and unpleasant:

> 'Now, reader, during the last two pages I have been giving you honey fresh from flowers, but you must not live entirely on food so luscious; taste then a little gall - just a drop, by way of change.' (p 320)

That Charlotte felt it necessary to give such warnings implies that she was aware that the public might expect something more cheerful or exciting than realism could offer. On the other hand, she clearly thought that the more discerning public, the critics, and perhaps even the publishers, would prefer a realistic setting and development to anything more high-flown. Here Charlotte's expectations of the response to the novel would thus have furthered the already existent tendency

[1] See Barthes, 1973: 137.

towards realism, and would have confirmed her avowal to eschew the wild dramatic myths she had once entertained. If the role of expectation of response was thus on balance confirmatory, this is certainly not to say that it had no effect: the strength of its influence may be seen when Charlotte realises that the publishers on behalf of the public require:

> '... something more imaginative and poetical - something more consonent with a highly wrought fancy, with a taste for pathos, with sentiments more tender, elevated, unwordly.'
> (Charlotte's preface to 'The Professor', page x.)

The result of this realisation can be seen in the contrasting form of her next novel: 'Jane Eyre'.

(x) 'Jane Eyre'

Superficially the plot of 'Jane Eyre' closely resembles that of 'The Professor': a story of economic necessity, work and progress. Jane Eyre is a single woman under the necessity of earning her living, who makes her own way in the world, helped and hindered in many ways by fate, until eventually the legacy puts a stop to the problem. Jane's story begins with her unhappy childhood, in degrading dependence upon her aunt, and subsequently at the unhealthy Lowood School. When this school is reformed, Jane benefits from her studies, and eventually becomes a teacher at the school. (Vol I, p 136) When she wishes to break out of the narrow world of Lowood, however, she recognises that she will have to work in the sort of position unappealing to her independent spirit:

> 'But Servitude! That must be a matter of fact.'
> (Vol I, p 140)

Her desire for social independence in the work situation leads her later to adopt a humble position rather than a dependent one:

> 'In truth it was humble ... but then, compared with that of governess in a rich house, it was independent; and the fear of servitude with strangers entered my soul like iron: it was not ignoble - not unworthy - not mentally degrading.' (Vol II, p 201)

However, her ultimate wish would of course be economic independence:

> 'It would, indeed, be a relief ... if I had ever so small an independency.' (Vol II, pp 49-50)

> '... independence would be glorious - yes, I felt that - that thought swelled my heart.' (Vol II, p 249)

Realistically, however, the most she can hope for is to work independently, which in her situation means a preference for the same economic action as was chosen in 'The Professor':

> 'The utmost I hope is to save money enough out of my earnings to set up a school some day in a little house rented by myself.' (Vol I, p 332)

Yet to attain this end,[1] Jane has to work within the means at present available to her, means that are considered too restricted; and this attitude is extended, as in 'The Professor', to a general complaint about the constraints upon women's employment:

> 'Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex.' (Vol I, p 182)

As in 'The Professor', there is a stress upon not being a burden, seen particularly where Jane wishes to avoid relying any longer upon the charity and benevolence of the Rivers family, and is thus willing to undertake any honest type of employment, no matter how humble:

[1] More precisely, this end is in fact 'further means'. Jane recognises that her present earnings may one day amount to a new economic situation, which will alter the conditions of her economic action, and so enable her to earn her living by more agreeable means. Thus her action is conceived in terms of means to further means: see above, Chapter 5, p 123.

'"... you desire to be independent of us?"

"I do: I have already said so. Show me how to work or how to seek work: ... I will be a dressmaker; I will be a plain workwoman: I will be a servant, a nurse-girl, if I can be no better," I answered.'
(Vol II, pp 188-9)

She even wishes to be financially independent of her future husband, Mr. Rochester, which strengthens her longing for an independency: in practice, however, she resolves to -

'... continue to act as Adèle's governess; by that I shall earn my board and lodging, and thirty pounds a year besides. I'll furnish my own wardrobe out of that money, and you shall give me nothing but ... your regard:' (Vol II, p 52)

The work ethic is again apparent in 'Jane Eyre', with a stress on joy in activity, and misery in passivity and stagnation:

'... I was weary of an existence all passive. ... To pass its threshold was to return to stagnation; ... to slip again over my faculties the viewless fetters of a uniform and too still existence;'
(Vol I, pp 192-3)

'... my life was uniform, but not unhappy, because it was not inactive.' (Vol I, p 136)

Yet, despite similarities to 'The Professor', one feels that in 'Jane Eyre' the work ethic is less central: for example, when Jane becomes economically independent through the legacy, her charity work is vastly reduced; and there is not the same vigour in the sense of duty with which it is performed; whilst it is true that she remains active, the form the activity takes is that of -

'... domestic endearments and household joys ... The best things the world has!'
(Vol II, p 264)

Neither this period of Jane's 'household joys' with the Rivers family, nor the later ten years of blissful married life performing similar womanly duties for her husband, Mr. Rochester, strike one as being empty in the same way as the state of achieved independence at the end of

'The Professor': household duties, love and affection are portrayed in such a positive light that there is no necessity to invent a 'Victor' and thereby prolong the theme of hard work and economic progress.

The favourable attitude towards household duties etc. contrasts with the view of them as over-confining such as the author presents in the above quotation on women's employment. It seems plausible to suggest that, when employment has to be undertaken to earn one's living, Charlotte is concerned that the sort of work available to women does not offer much room for control, responsibility, initiative and mental liberty; but that, when one is economically independent, and when one has warmth and security through the presence of those one loves, so that there is no need to undertake taxing work to occupy one's mind against loneliness and boredom, then household tasks become household joys. This tends to confirm the suggestion, made in the analysis of 'The Professor', that Charlotte's harsh work ethic is largely a 'promotion' which may be at least slackened as soon as economic independence makes it redundant.

The theme of hard work and economic progress is neatly curtailed in 'Jane Eyre' as a result of the legacy, a device that would have been totally out of place in 'The Professor'. The legacy in 'Jane Eyre' is an 'ideological device'[1] that modifies the otherwise inevitable course of events, and thereby fulfills certain distinct functions in the presentation of the 'Jane Eyre' world view. It serves the purpose of showing Jane's generosity and of enabling her to achieve her economic independence outside of marriage, thus avoiding her becoming intolerably (in the author's eyes) dependent upon her husband. If the legacy were not introduced, and if Charlotte were still unwilling to allow her heroine to bring no money to a marriage from which she would greatly benefit in

[1] See above, Chapter 10, p 247

economic terms, then only two solutions would remain: the ending might be altered, so that Jane's blind husband would not demand all of her time, and she would be able to contribute financially to the marriage by working: but such an ending would rather spoil the blissful harmony of the concluding scenes in which an ideal of intimacy and concord is represented. Alternatively, Jane could earn her independency before marriage, which would over-burden the book with tiresome economic realities, which Charlotte wanted to avoid, since, and this is the crucial point, economic realities do not constitute the central theme of the novel. Whilst retaining as the backbone of the narrative the economic progress of the principal character, Charlotte's second novel, unlike 'The Professor', is dominated by a non-economic theme: the main interest focuses upon the loneliness of a single woman and her stormy love-relationship with her employer. The economic aspect is less highly stressed, and there is less glorification of the economic virtues that permeate 'The Professor'. This is not to say that the work ethic, the aim of economic independence, or the value of social independence in the work situation, have been dropped: far from it. Indeed social independence is perhaps an even stronger theme in 'Jane Eyre', dealing as it does with the position of a governess in a Victorian household. And the potential strength of the work ethic is felt in the background even when less evident on the surface: for example, Rochester's blindness, apart from acting as divine retribution, may be seen, as the legacy, as a device to overcome the still so powerful work ethic. Rochester's blindness allows Jane to escape St. John Rivers' call for assistance in his missionary projects, and to avoid any duties in marriage (e.g., of acting as Adèle's governess) other than those of looking after her husband. The need to use such devices testifies both to the continuing strength of the work ethic, and to the nevertheless overriding concern with the love theme.

The transformation of world view from 'The Professor' to 'Jane Eyre' cannot be attributed to a change in Charlotte's own world view: one must take account of elements of her literary role, and, in particular, of her increasing awareness of the expectations of the public, through her contact with publishers. She realised that the latter would be more likely to accept a rather more sensational novel, and this led to the release of certain thematic possibilities that she had kept restrained in her former novel. Clearly Charlotte was not slow in allowing herself to indulge once more in the sort of imaginative creativity that she had abandoned with Angria, for she began writing 'Jane Eyre' while 'The Professor' was still going the rounds of the publishers. (Gaskell: 282-3) In this second novel, the attitudes relevant to her economic action and work situation are not forgotten, but become less relevant; and her work ethic, though still evident, is diminished in strength, centrality and wider extension. At the same time, freed from the restrictions placed upon imaginative development by Charlotte's self-imposed 'realism' in 'The Professor', a love theme comes to predominate, of the type that prevailed in Charlotte's former Angrian myths, comprising the heroine's relationship with a strong, mysterious, dominating male with hints of evil about him.

The significant change, then, from 'The Professor' to 'Jane Eyre', is in terms of the form[1] of the novel: the formative principles in Charlotte's second novel no longer included a narrow conception of the 'reality' she was to portray, nor a restrictive expressive style of realism. The expressive style of 'Jane Eyre', closer to that of Charlotte's Angrian fantasies, allows the various melodramatic elements of the plot:

[1] See above, Chapter 10, p 228 ff

the mad wife; the last minute interruption of the wedding ceremony; the collapse of Jane at the point of death on the doorstep of strangers who turn out to be her cousins; the legacy; the voice of Rochester calling her many miles away; Rochester's blindness, treated somewhat as divine retribution; Rochester's partial recovery from sight, treated as a case where 'God had tempered judgement with mercy.' (Vol II, p 370) Wild and passionate scenes would not be at home in the neatly ordered world created by the expressive style and prevailing attitudes of 'The Professor'; and it is this neatly ordered world that recedes considerably into the background in 'Jane Eyre'. The character of Rochester, however, is perhaps the most striking departure from the world view of 'The Professor': Rochester for the major part of the novel resembles a Gothic hero, with scarcely any characteristics of his own save with relevance to Jane's desire for a strong and mysterious master whom she can revere. It is in the portrayal of Rochester that the cognitive style of Charlotte's Angrian myths is most evident.

In this section we have noted the important similarities in specific aspects of the world views of 'The Professor' and 'Jane Eyre', and the nonetheless striking transformation of the general form of the novel, together with the implications of this transformation for particular elements of the literary universe, including the employment of ideological devices. We have also noted the influence of Charlotte's altered conception of the expectations of her readers. It is clear that the changed form of Charlotte's second novel should be seen as a deliberate move on her part to achieve greater success than with her first novel, which had failed to attract publishers: yet it seems likely that such a move would not be felt by her as false and contrived, but rather as <u>liberating</u>. The influence of her expectation of reader-response to the novel thus alters from the, on balance, confirmatory role in 'The Professor', to its liberating role in 'Jane Eyre'.

After the publication of 'Jane Eyre', Charlotte naturally received greater feedback from the literary world, both in terms of sales, and, most significantly for her, from critics. We shall see the influence of these new literary contacts upon the form of Charlotte's next novel: 'Shirley'.

## (xi) 'Shirley'

'Shirley' has a considerably broader compass than Charlotte's other novels, and explores a far wider range of themes. To serve as a preliminary comparison with her other novels, however, it is useful to begin by examining the qualities, situation and development of the four central characters, around whom the plot revolves.

Neither of the two heroines has to earn her own living, but Caroline Helstone is closer than Shirley Keelder to the heroines of Charlotte's other novels. Caroline is economically dependent upon her uncle, Rev. Helstone, and she feels that it is her duty to earn her living. She suggests to her uncle that she should take a position as a governess, but he refuses to allow this, and assures her that he will settle an annuity upon her. (Vol I, pp 276-7) Even though all around her proclaim that it is best for her to remain in this dependent situation, Caroline still wishes to gain an occupation merely for the activity involved, so that she will be able to take her mind off the pain of her lonely existence:

> 'I long to have something absorbing and compulsory to fill my head and hands, and to occupy my thoughts. ... successful labour has its recompense; a vacant, weary, lonely, hopeless life has none.'
> (Vol I, p 326)

Caroline is eventually dissuaded from further thoughts of being a governess by Mrs. Pryor, who gives a vivid picture of the horrors of this socially dependent work situation, and inveighs particularly against the social

distance and indeed humiliation involved. (Vol II, pp 84-88) Caroline thus settles on charity-work as an alternative to employment (Vol I, p 425); but she complains of the lack of opportunities of 'interesting and profitable occupation' for single women. (Vol II, p 107) She notes that the brothers of the single girls in the neighbourhood -

> '... are every one in business or in professions: they have something to do: their sisters have no earthly employment, but household work and sewing; ... The great wish - the sole aim of every one of them is to be married, but the majority will never marry: they will die as they now live.' (Vol II, p 107-8)

This state of affairs thus leads to the depressing situation of that 'very unhappy race' of 'old maids'. (Vol I, p 255) Caroline however eventually does marry, though of course for love rather than financial gain - and in any case she presumably brings to the marriage the money from her annuity. Her charity work, however, does not diminish after marriage: she is indeed provided with extra opportunities for such work through the increasing wealth of her husband.

Caroline thus illustrates Charlotte's continuing concern with the values of not depending on others for financial assistance, and of gaining a socially independent work situation if one has to work for a living. Through Caroline, we receive a stronger protest than hitherto concerning the lack of opportunities for female employment; and for the first time in Charlotte's novels a non-economic motivation for work comes to the fore: i.e., work as occupying the mind, and alleviating loneliness and despair. This view of work was of only subordinate significance in Charlotte's previous novels, and is clearly related to the circumstances under which 'Shirley' was written, i.e. the death of Charlotte's two sisters:

> '... great part of it was written under the shadow of impending calamity; and the last volume, I cannot deny, was composed in the eager, restless endeavour to combat mental sufferings that were scarcely tolerable.'
> (Gaskell: 413)

Louis Moore exemplifies all the horrors of governess dependency in a man, for he is a tutor with Shirley's relations. He is even willing to undertake the economically insecure venture of being a pioneer in the New World in order to escape the social dependence of his present work situation. (Vol II, pp 422-3) He eventually gains economic independence through marrying Shirley, but this is not his motive - otherwise, like his brother Robert, he would not have succeeded (Vol II, p 306 ff); nor is it the point of the marriage in the novel, which is rather to show the power of love to break down status barriers, more generally to advocate treating people as individuals rather than members of status-groups, and to bring to fruition Charlotte's archetypal love relationship of dominant male and submitting female tamed of her own free will by the master of her choice:

> 'Did I not say I prefer a master? ... A man whose approbation can reward - whose displeasure punish me. A man I shall feel it impossible not to love, and very possible to fear.' (Vol II, p 333)

Any hint that Louis might feel dependent upon his wife's money after marriage is eradicated by the account of his hard work as master of Fieldhead, Shirley's estate, which has of course become his property, and for which he has taken over full responsibility:

> 'Never was wooer of wealthy bride so thoroughly absolved from the subaltern part; so inevitably compelled to assume a paramount character.'
> (Vol II, p 459)

This active picture is completed by his working steadily at benevolent tasks, e.g. as a magistrate. (Vol II, p 467)

Shirley herself differs from Charlotte's other heroines in that she is already 'rich - very rich' (Vol I, p 318), and thus already enjoys

economic independence. It is indeed precisely for this independence that it grants her, rather than for status or material possessions, that her money is valued:

> '... Shirley's head ran on other things than money and position. She was glad to be independent as to property:' (Vol I, p 318)

Although the work ethic is by no means manifest in Shirley, she does devote considerable time and money to charity, which is justified from both moral and self-interest standpoints. (Vol I, pp 381-2)

Robert Moore is the character in the novel who most fully represents the work ethic; and in so far as he works hard in order to clear his family name from the debts that he inherited (Vol I, p 36), he is seen largely in heroic terms. However, the author clearly does not favour him when he ignores love for the sake of business (e.g., Vol I, pp 28-29), nor when he proposes to Shirley for the sake of her fortune. (Vol II, p 306 ff) Nevertheless, although his money-making zeal is not valued, it is felt to be preferable to less disciplined alternatives:

> '... neither was he the slave of his appetites; the active life to which he has been born and bred had given him something else to do than to join the futile chase of the pleasure-hunter: he was a man undegraded, the disciple of Reason, not the votary of Sense.' (Vol I, p 189)

This quotation indicates that being a slave to a desire for making money is, in the author's view, distinct from and superior to being a slave to the sensual appetites: the distinguishing feature is Reason - a life ordered, disciplined, calculated; a life falling neatly within the extended attitudes of the work ethic. Robert Moore thus illustrates in one character both Charlotte's positive evaluation of a willingness to work hard, and her disapproval of a work motivation centred on the acquisition of money for its own sake. Even Robert Moore comes to recognise the harmful effects of his money-making upon himself and others, and so decides to

become independent of the constraints of credit and commerce, and make his own way with Louis in the New World, where he will -

> '... work diligently, wait patiently, bear steadily.' (Vol II, p 312-3)

The repeal of the Orders in Council, however, enables him to stay back and turn to the true love offered him by Caroline, whom he marries. (Vol II, p 462) Through further diligence he is to become rich, which will in addition augment the income of Louis and Shirley (as landowners) (Vol II, p 468); but the author expresses doubts about the somewhat merciless destruction involved in achieving his manufacturer's dreams: the uprooting of the copse to be replaced by 'substantial stone and brick and ashes'. (Vol II, p 470) He does, however, intend to do good with his money, for instance through paying the salaries of a master and mistress for a day-school. (Vol II, p 469)

The novel concludes, then, in happiness and prosperity, where love wins (with two marriages); none of the heroes and heroines have to work for someone else to earn a living; men work to maintain their incomes or property; women work for philanthropic purposes in addition to the household duties.

The above analysis of the principal characters of 'Shirley' demonstrates Charlotte's continuing concern with the themes of work and independence. There are, however, two significant developments in the world view of 'Shirley': one, which we have already noted, is the increasing emphasis upon work as occupying the mind, as alleviating psychic distress. This seems to be a genuine development in Charlotte's own world view, as this very motivation for work was present during the writing of 'Shirley'. The other development is the increasing evidence of a stronger feminism. This seems equally to be a development in Charlotte's own world view, but one that relates particularly

to her experience as an author. After the publication of 'Jane Eyre', certain reviews affected her deeply; she was particularly hurt when she was judged by the standards of a special category of 'female literature'. It was indeed for fear of such judgements that she had originally, with her sisters, adopted pseudonyms of ambiguous gender. (Gaskell: 265) Whilst she was writing 'Shirley' she was aware that she would be deemed by many to be going beyond the bounds considered fit for a novel by an authoress: thus she writes to G. H. Lewes, before he has read 'Shirley':

> 'I wish you did not think me a woman. I wish all reviewers believed 'Currer Bell' to be a man; they would be more just to him. You will, I know, keep measuring me by some standard of what you deem becoming to my sex; where I am not what you consider graceful, you will condemn me ... Come what will, I cannot, when I write, think always of myself and of what is elegant and charming in feminity; it is not on those terms, or with such ideas, I ever took pen in hand;'
> (Nov. 1st. 1849, quoted in Gaskell: 372)

In fact Charlotte's plea failed: Lewes, in reviewing 'Shirley' for the Edinburgh Review, took as his starting point a conceptual scheme in which 'female literature' was awarded a special category, and according to which 'Shirley' was thus labelled and criticised. (Gaskell: 384) Charlotte's expectation of such treatment, after the reviews of 'Jane Eyre', clearly influenced her own world view and that expressed in 'Shirley'. The one field in which she, as a woman, had been able to find work with social independence and the exercise of her faculties was, in such attitudes as Lewes evinced, subject to attempts at regaining its status as a male stronghold. Charlotte's response to this is in the form of a confirmation and development of the moderate feminism that had arisen from her experience of the narrow occupational opportunities for women. Thus in 'Shirley' we find a wider extension of feminist attitudes, not only in Caroline's sustained plea for increased occupational opportunities for women (Vol II, pp 107-110), but also through the exposure of the more general views held by the unsympathetic Mr. Helstone:

> 'He made no pretence of comprehending women, or comparing them with men: they were a different, probably a very inferior order of existence; a wife could not be her husband's companion, much less his confidante, much less his stay.' (Vol I, p 71)

> 'At heart, he could not abide sense in women: he liked to see them as silly, as light-headed, as vain, as open to ridicule as possible; because they were then in reality what he held them to be, and wished them to be - inferior: toys to play with, to amuse a vacant hour and to be thrown away.' (Vol I, p 166)

Although 'Shirley' bears witness to an extension of feminist attitudes in Charlotte's world view, the extension stops short at her ideal of romantic love, which takes on the qualities of a master-pupil relationship, where the superiority of the male is unquestioned, as in Louis' feelings for Shirley:

> '... it was unutterably sweet to feel myself at once near her and above her: to be conscious of a natural right and power to sustain her, as a husband should sustain his wife. ... it is her faults ... that bring her near to me ... for a most selfish, but deeply-natural reason: these faults are the steps by which I mount to ascendancy over her.' (Vol II, p 290)

The sphere of male-female love thus appears to be a relatively autonomous province of meaning[1] for Charlotte, compartmentalised from the wider extension of her feminism.

Apart from the two developments in the world view of 'Shirley' that appear to stem from Charlotte's own developing consciousness, other differences in the universe of 'Shirley', in comparison with Charlotte's earlier novels, cannot be attributed to Charlotte's world view beyond the sphere of literary expression. In addition to the themes of work, independence and love, 'Shirley' deals with a much wider range of subject-matter and attitudes than Charlotte's previous novels; and this increase in scope must be understood in relation to the formative principles of 'Shirley', which themselves must be seen in the context of Charlotte's authorship role and literary contacts.

[1] See above, Chapter 8, p 188

With the publication of 'Jane Eyre', Charlotte became susceptible to influence from three principal literary sources: her readers, mainly in terms of the number of copies sold; her publishers, communicating with her on the progress of her next novel; and the critics, through their reviews of 'Jane Eyre', and through personal correspondence with Charlotte on aspects of literary criticism. Charlotte's success with 'Jane Eyre', at least in terms of sales, must have to some extent vindicated her move away from the narrow realism of 'The Professor', and probably encouraged a degree of commitment[1] to the altered expressive style partly responsible for her success. The contact with her publishers would have strengthened this commitment, since they hoped for another success on the scale of 'Jane Eyre'; but it appears that the most salient role contacts[2] for Charlotte were the critics, perhaps through their greater legitimacy in conferring 'success'. Charlotte was certainly very conscientious in taking account of the judgements of her work:

> 'She carefully studied the different reviews and criticisms that had appeared on 'Jane Eyre', in hopes of extracting precepts and advice from which to profit.' (Gaskell: 365)

The most notable criticisms, apart from those relating to 'female literature' as noted above, concerned deficiencies of 'realism' in 'Jane Eyre':

> 'You warn me to beware of melodrama, and you exhort me to adhere to the real'. - she writes to G. H. Lewes Nov. 6th., 1847; quoted in Gaskell: 309

Charlotte thus intended to avoid in 'Shirley' the melodramatic tendencies of 'Jane Eyre', and clearly felt that censure would be deserved if, now that she could gain publication for a second novel on the strength of 'Jane Eyre's' success, she departed so radically from the realism of 'The Professor'. Nevertheless, the public still would not be happy with the rather dry reality of 'The Professor', and Charlotte was by now committed to preserve the elements of strong imaginative 'truth' that had

[1] See above, Chapter 9, p 215

[2] See above, Chapter 8, p 193

so intensified 'Jane Eyre': in communication with George Lewes, she defended her stand for 'truth' and 'poetry', in addition to the mere realism which, she contended, characterised the work of Jane Austen:

> 'Miss Austen being, as you say, without 'sentiment', without poetry, maybe is sensible, real (more real than true), but she cannot be great.'
> (January 18th., 1848, quoted in Gaskell: 320)

Out of these contending literary aims, 'Shirley' emerges as something of an experiment and something of a compromise: it may be seen as a modification of a literary form currently available[1] to Charlotte, i.e. social realism. The expressive style is less melodramatic than 'Jane Eyre', but allows more room for the imaginative exploration of 'poetic truth' than 'The Professor'. Perhaps the most significant development in expressive style is the increasing evidence of explicit statements of the author's intentions in the text itself, together with attempted justifications of these intentions. There are traces of such an expressive style in 'Jane Eyre', where Charlotte supposed the reader would not accept unpleasant 'truths';

> '... oh, romantic reader, forgive me for telling the plain truth ...' (Vol I, p 182)

but an explicit[2] and self-justifying expressive style is far more apparent in 'Shirley', and is directed more towards warning the reader to expect a cool realism than towards begging his forgiveness for the portrayal of horrors:

> 'If you think ... that anything like a romance is preparing for you, reader, you never were more mistaken.
> Do you anticipate sentiment, and poetry, and reverie?
> Do you expect passion, and stimulus, and melodrama?
> Calm your expectations; reduce them to a lowly standard.
> Something real, cool, and solid, lies before you;
> something unromantic as Monday morning, ...
> (Vol I, pp 1-2)

[1] See above, Chapter 10, p 239 ff, for a discussion of the concept of 'available forms'.

[2] For a discussion of the way the social definition of a writer's work may induce an explicit expressive style, see above, Chapter 9, p 215

Yet 'social realism' is not merely a matter of an expressive style: it is a form that demands the treatment of broad social issues, of characters representing various sections of society. The setting chosen, West Yorkshire at the time of the Luddites, both satisfies these demands of social realism and, in her knowledge of the local character, of the area, and of the sediment of local history, fulfils the requirement of being within the range of Charlotte's personal experience. (Gaskell: 363) It is more likely to have been for these reasons that the Luddite social setting was chosen, rather than for the sake of focusing upon a major historical conflict, as Eagleton would suggest. (1975: 8) The setting does not necessarily dictate the focus of the novel; and Charlotte seems to use the Luddite situation to reflect and encourage a continuing concern, on her part, with the realities of economic action, and in particular with the heroic struggle of an individual for economic advancement: Robert Moore's struggles, whilst distinct from Charlotte's in motivation, situation and consequences, nevertheless run parallel in certain aspects to those that Charlotte underwent herself. The other major characters are more marginal to the Luddite setting, particularly Louis, the tutor, and Caroline, the Reverend's niece: this suggests that, despite the historical and geographical specificity, the thematic range is wide.

It is the general form of social realism, with its broader social scope and the dropping of the first-person narrative[1], that allows the greater variety of themes: these break through the limits of the tight, coherent world view of 'The Professor', and yet can incorporate, as a major part of the subject-matter, the economic realities that faded in 'Jane Eyre', where the principal focus rested firmly on the theme of love and loneliness. It was, of course, precisely this exploration of several themes that disturbed many critics of 'Shirley', who complained

[1] Third-person narrative may be seen as a literary device employed to both aid and indicate a general form of social realism. Cf. Chapter 10, p 246 above.

of a lack of unity. Certainly one cannot find in 'Shirley' the unity of Charlotte's other novels, written as autobiographies of individuals' progress through life: 'Shirley' is not a novel with a single plot that we follow from beginning to end. It is much more a picture, with many themes and several plots, painted from the perspectives that we have found to dominate Charlotte's world view. It is in this world view that we detect the unity of the novel, as Korg points out: the characters radiate out in a series of concentric circles of valuation according to their proximity to the core values of Charlotte's world view. (Korg, 1957: 126-7)

It is, however, also in this world view that we find the most oustanding disharmony, the unresolved contradiction, namely between the themes of work and 'poetry'. The work ethic returns, after its partial eclipse in 'Jane Eyre', to be a central concern; but the form and setting[1] of 'Shirley' allows greater room that hitherto for the exploration of varieties of deep personal emotion, not only in the sphere of love, but also in a poetic relationship with nature. Yet if bliss in the novel often appears in the form of contemplation of natural or visionary scenes (e.g., Vol II, p 102), the conclusion of the novel, in the conventional happy ending of a double wedding, presents a picture of the future married life of the couples that seems far too busy with various kinds of economic and charitable activity to allow room for such contemplation. Charlotte is probably aware of the difficulty of making her strong work ethic compatible with the ideal of the sort of life that could be led given economic independence - and of course we

1 'Shirley' is the only novel by Charlotte in which principal characters (in this case the two heroines) have the time (because of their economic situation) for poetic feelings to any great extent. The fuller exploration of such feelings in 'Shirley' must be attributed to the structure of this particular novel, rather than to any alteration in Charlotte's own world view.

contend that the very strength of the work ethic derives from Charlotte's inclination towards a more contemplative, poetic existence, combined with her duty to earn her living. The conflict is thus built into Charlotte's own world view; and her awareness thereof appears to be expressed in her doubts about the successfully achieved embodiments of the work ethic at the end of the novel - though some of these misgivings may concern the products of manufacturing work rather than work as such. If Charlotte is aware of this contradiction in her world view, the recognition may well be a development of consciousness that is due to the form of 'Shirley': like any novel, 'Shirley' will encourage awareness of inconsistencies through its nature as a public written statement[1]; but in 'Shirley' the inconsistencies themselves are encouraged through the general form of the novel, which allows the exploration of diverse themes, and excludes the widespread operation of melodramatic devices. Thus the contradiction between work and 'poetry', which is resolved in 'The Professor' through an attempt, at the end of the novel, to preserve its narrow universe by rekindling the work theme in the picture of Victor's future; and which is resolved in 'Jane Eyre' by the use of melodramatic devices, such as Rochester's blindness forcing Jane to look after him full-time; remains unresolved at the end of 'Shirley', with Charlotte handing over the quest for the moral into the hands of the reader.

The above analysis of 'Shirley' has revealed the following: the continuation of the themes of work and independence; the expression in the novel of two developments in Charlotte's own world view, both of which are related to her literary occupation; the influence of literary

[1] See above, Chapter 10, p 247

contacts upon the general form of the novel, and in turn, the effects of this form upon the world view of 'Shirley' in comparison with Charlotte's earlier novels, with particular reference to the work ethic. In the next section, many of the above issues are tackled in relation to Charlotte's last novel: 'Villette'.

(xii) 'Villette'

The genesis of 'Villette' must be seen in the context of the public reaction to 'Shirley'. To Charlotte's surprise, the critics generally rated 'Shirley' inferior to Jane Eyre:

> '... 'Shirley' is disparaged in comparison with 'Jane Eyre'; and yet I took great pains with 'Shirley'. I did not hurry; I tried to do my best, and my own impression was that it was not inferior to the former work;'
> (Charlotte: letter Sept. 5th., 1850, quoted in Gaskell: 413)

When Charlotte wrote of 'Shirley' being 'disparaged', she was referring to the critics, for the general public had shown appreciation of the book, and it had sold well: the local reaction had been particularly favourable. (Gaskell: 384) But it was the critics who were the salient judges for Charlotte,[1] and, as noted above, they had particularly stressed the lack of unity in comparison with 'Jane Eyre'. Charlotte thus came to the conviction that her greatest power lay in writing within the sphere of personal experience, which included only a narrow range of social relationships; and of poetic truth, i.e. intensely felt emotion imaginatively conceived or reconstructed. She justifies this approach in a letter to her publisher:

> 'You will see that 'Villete' touches on no matter of public interest. I cannot write books handling the topics of the day; it is of no use trying. Nor can I write a book for its moral. Nor can I take up a philanthropic scheme, though I honour philanthropy;'
> (Charlotte; letter to G. Smith, October 30th., 1852, quoted in Gaskell: 477)

[1] See above, p 350

'Villette' thus moves from the attempt at social realism in 'Shirley' to what has been termed 'psychological realism'. (Ewbank, 1966: 174) What does this realism encompass?

'Villette', like 'The Professor', is set in Brussels, and much of both of these novels consists of an imaginative reconstruction of Charlotte's experience at the school of M. and Mme. Heger. Superficially the plot of 'Villette' thus once more hinges on the economic struggles of an individual, the autobiographical hero of 'The Professor' becoming a heroine in 'Villette'. This heroine, Lucy Snowe, has to work for a living in order to avoid destitution. (Vol. I, p 90) She eventually attains a post as English teacher, which offers her more independence than she would have as a private governess or companion:

> 'Mr Home himself offered me a handsome sum - thrice my present salary - if I would accept the office of companion to his daughter. I declined. I think I should have declined had I been poorer than I was, ... I could teach; I could give lessons; but to be either a private governess or a companion was unnatural to me. Rather than fill the former post in any great house, I would deliberately have taken a housemaid's place ... in peace and independence. Rather than be a companion, I would have made shirts and starved.' (Vol II, p 77)

Lucy's aim is to obtain a socially independent work situation, and, ideally, the eventual competency:

> '... I had pondered ... how I should make some advance in life, take another step towards an independent position; ... when I shall have saved one thousand francs, I will take a tenement ... begin with taking day-pupils, and so work my way upwards ... (like Mme. Beck, who) ... has a competency already secured for old age ... With self-denial and economy now, and steady exertion by-and-by, an object in life need not fail you. ... be content to labour for independence until you have proved, by winning that prize, your right to look higher.' (Vol II, p 181)

Lucy is most concerned to <u>work</u> for her economic independence: she values the capacity to save (Vol II, p 395), but not where this involves an avaricious hoarding, a 'love of money for its own sake' (Vol I, pp 206-7).

By saving she can help herself to progress without becoming dependent upon others through debt, unlike the epicurean Parisienne, Mlle St. Pierre. (Vol I, p 207). This latter would like to attain economic independence through marriage, and have her debts paid by a rich or hard-working husband, a notion of which Lucy clearly disapproves. (Vol II, p 139) In contrast, Lucy is committed to working so that she can avoid being a burden to others:

> '... while I can work for myself, I am spared the pain of being a burden to anybody.' (Vol II, p 56)

Charlotte makes it clear that she values Lucy's self-reliance, which is associated with her Protestantism (Vol II, p 276); and Paul Emanuel's 'sturdy independence' (Vol II, p 100), despite his Catholic faith. Lucy's hard work is rewarded at the end of the novel: Paul has come to admire her so much that he has arranged the setting up of a school that she will run, paying the rent of the tenement out of her savings. (Vol II, p 395) Paul is absent for three years, but these are the happiest years of Lucy's life: she enjoys working hard in her socially independent situation, achieves gradual economic progress, and puts to use an indirect inheritance of a hundred pounds in expanding her school. (Vol II, pp 401-2)

As can be expected from the above, the work ethic is still very strong in 'Villette', and is particularly manifested in points of contrast: sloth versus action, energy and practical ambition (Vol I, pp 56 & 121); the city versus the West End:

> 'The city seems so much more in earnest: its business, its rush, its roar, are serious things, sights, and sounds. The city is getting its living - the West End but enjoys its pleasure.' (Vol I, p 74);

work versus pleasure and time-wasting:

> 'She mortally hated work, and loved what she called pleasure; being an insipid, heartless, brainless, dissipation of time.' (Vol I, p 208)

Even Lucy's admittedly tongue-in-cheek objections to a painting of a large recumbent nude are taken from the standpoint of the work ethic:

> 'She lay half-reclined on a couch; why, it would be difficult to say; broad daylight blazed around her; she appeared in hearty health, strong enough to do the work of two plain cooks; ... she has no business to lounge away the noon on a sofa. ... Then, for the wretched untidiness surrounding her, there could be no excuse.' (Vol I, pp 333-4)

The emphasis upon the work ethic in 'Villette' may be merely a retention of the work ethic that Charlotte originally adopted to help her to continue with employment in socially dependent work situations;[1] but it seems likely that its retention is encouraged by a motivation for work that became evident in the world view of 'Shirley'[2], i.e. working for the sake of occupying the mind and overcoming loneliness and despair: we have already noted that this motivation was present during the writing of 'Shirley' and 'Villette'[3]. In several of Charlotte's letters we find references to the difficulty she finds in writing at this time:

> 'I thought to find occupation and interest in writing, when alone at home, but hitherto my efforts have been vain; the deficiency of every stimulus is so complete. ... I cannot describe what a time of it I had after my return from London, Scotland, etc. There was a reaction that sunk me to the earth; the deadly silence, solitude, desolation, were awful; the craving for companionship, the hopelessness of relief ...'
> (Charlotte: letter to Ellen Nussey, quoted in Gaskell: 416-7);

and to the way her conscience goads her to work at the novel:

> '... I ought to be put in prison, and kept on bread and water in solitary confinement - without even a letter from Cornhill - till I had written a book.'
> (Charlotte: letter to G Smith, February 1851, quoted in Gaskell: 432).

1 See above, p 330 ff

2 See above, p 344

3 See above, p 322

The circumstances of the writing of 'Villette' may help us to understand why the work theme, though still strong in this novel, is given such a different treatment from that in 'The Professor'. In the quotations cited from 'Villette' above, it would seem that the work theme and the work ethic are essentially the same in these two novels; but the more subjective realism of 'Villette' allows recognition of the difficulty the heroine has in persisting in her work situation. Far more than Charlotte's other novels, 'Villette' admits of extremities of personal distress, of loneliness (e.g. Vol II, pp 25-27), of utter despair (e.g., Vol I, pp 259-260). And although the work ethic is certainly emphasised, the opposing sentiments are granted equal recognition. The battle is conceived in terms of Reason versus Imagination:

> 'According to (Reason), I was born only to work for a piece of bread, to await the pains of death, and steadily through all life to despond. Reason might be right; yet no wonder we are glad at times to defy her, to rush from under her rod and give a truant hour to imagination ... Reason is vindictive as a devil: for me she was always envenomed as a step-mother. If I have obeyed her it has chiefly been with the obedience of fear, not of love. Long ago I should have died of ill-usage ... but for that kinder Power who holds my secret and sworn allegiance'.
> (Vol I, pp 383-4)

This passage tends to confirm our suspicion that Charlotte's work ethic is a 'promotion'[1]; it indicates that the 'psychological realism' of 'Villette' allows the recognition of doubts and difficulties that would have been impossible in the neat and self-confident world view of 'The Professor'; and it leads us to compare the circumstances in which these two novels were written. 'The Professor' was written in an atmosphere more congenial to optimism: Charlotte's sisters were still alive, and all three were about to embark upon their first attempt at publishing a novel: the work theme is strong and self-confidently optimistic. In writing 'Villette', Charlotte no longer needs to work for her living, but rather

[1] See above, p 331

to occupy her mind against loneliness and despair; economic progress towards independence can no longer be conceived so simply as a path to earthly paradise: in the work of transcribing her personal experiences, Charlotte was now encouraged to give full recognition to those that she had undergone in her lonely, socially dependent work situations - experiences so close in character to the ones that she was now suffering.

In addition to allowing the full exploration of feelings opposed to the work ethic, the psychological realism of 'Villette' gives room to various other themes that could occupy only the background in 'The Professor'. The love theme is as strong as in 'Jane Eyre' and 'Shirley', with Paul Emanuel as a somewhat Angrian hero, an irascible but firm master.[1] Beyond the love theme, the form of 'Villette' encourages the exposition of several other deeply felt attitudes: e.g., towards religion - there are several severe attacks on Roman Catholicism in the novel (especially Chapter 36); and towards foreign lands and peoples - witnessed even in the derisory names given to Belgium and its towns: 'Villette' itself stands for Brussels! There are also signs in 'Villette' of Charlotte's experience of London life, a world of parties and concerts to which she had been introduced since her success as an author; Chapters 20 and 23 of 'Villette' are particularly concerned with the representation of this, for Charlotte, new world. But the major development of the novel's world view in terms of subject-matter, apart from the theme of loneliness and despair discussed above, is in its ending: although Lucy has achieved a considerable degree of economic success, the outlook is bleak because of the likely shipwreck of her future husband Paul. Charlotte modified the ending for her father's sake so that a happy ending might be interpreted -

[1] But Paul Emanuel is far more realistically drawn than Rochester in 'Jane Eyre': although Paul possesses some elements of an Angrian character, he is not Charlotte's archtypal dark, mysterious Gothic hero - 'Villette's' realism would not allow that.

> 'But the idea of M. Paul Emanuel's death at sea was stamped on her imagination, till it assumed the distinct force of reality; and she could no more alter her fictitious ending than if they had been facts which she was relating. All she could do in compliance with her father's wish was so to veil the fate in oracular words, as to leave it to the character and discernment of her readers to interpret her meaning.' (Gaskell: 479)

Eagleton blames this ambiguous ending on the novel itself, and ultimately on Charlotte's own world view -

> '... unable to opt for either possibility.' (1975: 73);

but this is grossly unfair, ignoring the biographical evidence that we have quoted from Mrs. Gaskell. In any case, a careful reading of the last paragraphs of the novel reveals that there is less ambiguity than Eagleton and the Reverend Patrick Brontë would like to believe: there is a strong implication of Paul's death at sea. We are left at the end of the novel with an impression of bitterness against fate, which is able thus to punish the good and diligent, whilst failing to mete out poetic justice to, for instance, the three Catholic semi-villains:

> 'Madame Beck prospered all the days of her life; so did Père Silas; Madame Walravens fulfilled her ninetieth year before she died. Farewell.' (Vol II, p 406)

So ends the novel, on a note which would have been inadmissable in Charlotte's other works, but which is perfectly appropriate within the psychological realism of 'Villette'. This ending must have pleased the critics more than Charlotte's publishers or her readers: it may be that her success gave her the freedom to be 'truthful'.

The form of 'Villette', whilst allowing a certain variety of subject-matter, a certain manner of treatment of the work and independence themes, and the unconventional ending, also involves an alteration of expressive style in comparison with Charlotte's earlier novels. The expressive style could not be called melodramatic, as in 'Jane Eyre', as the elements of melodrama in 'Villette' are less part of an Angrian

world view[1], and are rather devices that aid the plot. They are, furthermore, less ideological devices (like Rochester's blindness and Jane's legacy) than literary devices that are generally used to bring together the key characters in the novel, so that their story can be told through the eyes of the first-person narrator: the fire that brings together Dr. John and Paulina Home, after years of separation, is an example of this. (Vol II, p 14 ff) The expressive style of 'Villette' also differs from the cold, self-justifying realism of 'The Professor', and from the attempt at social realism in 'Shirley' - an attempt that tried to combine objective social analysis and the imaginative exploration of poetic truth; in 'Villette' we have rather an expressive style of intimate revelation, in which the 'realism' is directed at the heroine's own feelings in a spirit of open autobiographical exploration, and in which the reader is often treated as a confidant. (E.g. the references to the reader on pp 315, 320 & 349 of Vol I). There are still plenty of explicit claims to realism, with Charlotte as the 'faithful narrator' (Vol I, p 329) cutting from the 'homely web of truth' (Vol II, p 355); and a self-justifying expressive style is still in evidence (e.g., Vol II, p 6) - but neither are so common as in 'Shirley'. Writing in the first-person and treating the reader as a confidant means that there is less call to establish the authenticity[2] and legitimacy of the universe portrayed.

Thus in 'Villette' we again encounter the significant influence of a predominant expressive style in literature. Yet why did Charlotte adopt at this time an expressive style implying a closer relationship with her readers? It may be that her increasing contact with critics and publishers gave her greater confidence; or that the success of

1 See the comparison of Rochester and Paul Emanuel above p 360

2 Ewbank indicates that the fiction of autobiography has no need for self-conscious claims to authenticity in the form of explicit appeals to the reader. (1966: 166 &176)

'Shirley' as well as 'Jane Eyre' with the public made her feel more assured of the 'benefit of the doubt' with her readers; or it may be that she realised that, to explore fully her Brussels experiences, she would have to adopt a cognitive style that would not exclude the psychological truths that were the most important part of the subject-matter.

In 'Villette' we have yet again seen the importance of the general form of the novel upon the treatment of the subject-matter portrayed therein. Whilst the themes of work and independence, and the presence of the work ethic, are still strong in 'Villette', the general form of the novel allows the development of new themes: in particular, of loneliness and despair, of feelings that oppose the rigid discipline of the work ethic, and of the unhappy fate of the heroine at the end of the novel. It was suggested that such themes were related to the circumstances under which Charlotte herself worked at the construction of 'Villette', and were encouraged by the predominant expressive style of the novel, a style that is one of its crucial formative principles. The general form of the novel, including its predominant focus and expressive style, is seen in relation to Charlotte's role as an author: her public success with 'Jane Eyre' and 'Shirley', her relationships with critics and publishers, and the salience for her of the critical response to 'Shirley'.

In the final sections of this chapter we shall explore four elements, that have not been directly analysed in the preceding study of the themes of work and independence, but that are common to the world views of Charlotte's novels, and that are related to her economic action, work situation or literary role. These elements are: the range of occupations portrayed; status-consciousness; individualism; moralism.

(xiii) The Range of Occupations Portrayed

In Section (ii) of this chapter we saw that one of the most striking effects of Emily Brontë's economic action was the lack of portrayal of work in her novel.[1] Charlotte's economic action brought her into contact with a wider range of occupational groups, but the limits of this range are clearly visible in the portrayal of work activity in her novels. We see teaching, book-keeping, the work of a governess or tutor, domestic, medical and religious work; there is no picture of manual labour in the sphere of industry or agriculture. There also seems to be a distinct lower limit of social status below which individuals cannot play a major role in the novels: the aristrocracy, bourgeoisie, and particularly professional workers are portrayed, and the heroes and heroines themselves may be destitute, as long as respectably so; but servants are kept very much in the background[2], and the only sizable picture of an individual worker is that of William Farren in 'Shirley', who is given a job as a gardener to save him from unemployment , which is the fate of the mass of those who are not portrayed individually. (Vol I, pp 234-6) It does seem that Charlotte's work experience has limited her knowledge of various groups of people and their work, and this illustrates, as with Emily Brontë[3], the significance of work in broadening or narrowing the range of one's social contacts. But in addition to Charlotte's work experience, it would appear that an element of status-consciousness is partly responsible for keeping in the background those characters (the obvious example being servants) whose social status is below a certain limit.

1 See above, p 296 ff

2 Compare 'Wuthering Heights' in the significant characters of Nelly Dean (who is also the principal narrator) and Joseph.

3 See above, Section (v), p 309 ff

(xiv) Status-consciousness

Charlotte was from an early age imbued with a status-consciousness that probably derived from her father and aunt, and that she never quite abandoned. The main signs of this attitude in her novels are in the representation of interaction with the 'lower orders', where, e.g., one may communicate liberally with one's servants etc. as long as they do not 'presume' ('Shirley', Vol II, p 179): the disapproved 'presumption' here seems to be that of equality. Similarly, a lack of formal deference by a waiter or chambermaid is found disturbing. ('Villette', Vol I , p 70) At the other end of the status-hierarchy, Charlotte occasionally gives indications of a kind of cult of the gentleman, especially, as Faber points out (1971: 37-38), in terms of physical type, manners etc. (e.g., the first description of Dr. John in 'Villette': Vol I, pp 97-99).

Charlotte's original status-conservatism is, however, partially broken down by two factors; her attitude towards love, that transcends status considerations; and her experience of working as a governess. We have already seen in Charlotte's novels how love is capable of breaking through conventional status barriers, so that a governess (Jane Eyre) marries her employer, and, more outrageously, a tutor marries a wealthy landowner (Shirley). Of more relevance for our interest in Charlotte's work situation is the influence of her experience as a governess upon her attitudes towards status: her original romantic view of the aristocracy, as manifested in her Angrian chronicles, was necessarily modified by encounters with both aristocracy and haute bourgeoisie in the two households in which she worked as governess. She had never before felt insuperable barriers between herself and those of higher social status - e.g. the two lifelong friends she made at Roe Head, Ellen Nussey and Mary Taylor; but as a governess she found herself kept carefully outside

of the social life of the families with which she lived: she was maintained at a social distance far enough to prevent any degree of intimacy, even with the children she was in care of. The memorable scenes of social gatherings in 'Jane Eyre' (especially Ch. 17) where Jane, the governess, is ignored or even snubbed, are likely to have stemmed from personal experience, and carry a strong indictment - as does the conversation in 'Shirley' between Caroline and Mrs. Pryor, where the latter, though highly conservative, speaks of the horrors of being a governess, isolated by the barriers of social status. (Vol II, pp 84-88) Charlotte's former easier relations with those of a higher social status meant that she saw no reason to avoid extending her general evaluative criteria of individuals to those socially superior to her; and the result, in her encounters through her work situation as governess, is that she found them on the whole superficial and pretentious. Charlotte's negative view of the aristocracy, her condemnation of their tendencies to triviality and status-consciousness, is revealed in her novels through the portrayal of certain type-characters who manifest these tendencies: e.g., the Sympsons in 'Shirley', or Ginevra Fanshawe in 'Villette'; and the bourgeoisie fares no better, with Charlotte emphasising the narrowness of mercenary values: e.g., in the characters of Edward Crimsworth in 'The Professor' and (for the first part of the book) Robert Moore in 'Shirley'; and to a lesser extent in the characters of Yorke Hunsden in 'The Professor' and Hiram Yorke in 'Shirley'. Charlotte's aristocractic or bourgeois heroes are portrayed clearly as deviants within their social group: for instance, in 'Shirley', Shirley herself stands outside her aristocratic status group, as represented by the Sympsons, with whom she compares favourably; and Robert Moore becomes truly suitable as a hero only when he partially relinquishes the narrow money-seeking nature of the bourgeoisie. It is perhaps significant that in 'Villette' the two heroes are, like Charlotte herself, professionals: a doctor and a teacher.

In the modification of Charlotte's status-consciousness we have seen once more the influence of her work situation experience. Charlotte recognised the atypicality of her views on status, and this recognition results in the adoption of certain expressive styles, as we shall see in the section below on moralism. Firstly, however, we shall look at an attitude that seems to have been extended from Charlotte's economic action: individualism.

(xv) Individualism

One of the most striking elements of Charlotte's world view is her individualism, and this appears to be at least partly developed from the consciousness involved in her economic action. Charlotte's means of earning her living provides no clear grouping with which she could join to maintain or improve her economic situation:[1] she worked as a relatively isolated individual, and the path to economic advancement was through 'making her own way in the world', alone and without help, working her way gradually and individually upwards, with the ultimate aim of the competency. Thus the conditions of Charlotte's economic action would have at least confirmed the individualism that was doubtless part of the culture in which she grew up: her father was a prime example of the self-made man - Irish peasant's son to Rector of Haworth; and individualism was an important element in the world view of Charlotte's middle-class readers. In her novels, Charlotte's economic individualism is manifested in the treatment of individual economic progress in heroic terms; though the element of heroism doubtless derives partly from the heroes and heroines having to endure highly restrictive work situations on their way to success.

[1] The question of possible groupings, that the individual could join to promote his economic advancement, is discussed in Chapter 7, p 149 above.

This economic individualism may already be seen as a development beyond the narrow confines of Charlotte's economic action; but more interesting are the wider extensions of this perspective. One such extension is the individualistic view of political action that is apparent in Charlotte's novels. Self-determination, for instance, apart from such rare possibilities as the use of parliamentary means (e.g., 'Shirley', Vol I, p 243), is seen in individual terms; wherever group action is the only alternative, resignation or patience is the author's message. (e.g., 'Shirley', Vol I, p 199) The possibilities for group determination by the Luddites in 'Shirley' are dismissed as 'presumption' (Vol I, p 382), and the workers who do thus presume are viewed as many fools being led by a few mad levellers,

> '... whose chief motive-principle is a selfish ambition, as dangerous as it is puerile.' (Vol I, p 195)

In comparison, Robert Moore is treated as a 'heroic tradesman' (Vol I, p 295); his defence of the mill against the workers is a courageous act of a few individuals against a mob (Vol II, p 38 ff); and his later schemes for improvement likewise do not take the possibility of group political action into account. (Vol II, pp 466 & 468-9) Thus the problems of society, which seem to derive from man's natural selfishness (which is only increased when they form together into groups: Shirley, Vol I, p 241), may be overcome only through individual charity. What is more, charity is not only recommended but is seen to be efficacious. In 'The Professor', M. Vandenhuten's recommendation comes to the rescue of William Crimsworth. In 'Jane Eyre', the Rivers family's charity saves Jane from destitution and probable death. In 'Shirley' we see none of the individuals in real financial distress, except William Farren, who is again <u>personally</u> helped by Mr. Hall, Robert Moore, Mr. Yorke and Shirley. Thus the horror is kept in the background and treated as a mass phenomenon, whilst Charlotte's emphasis on individual aid as the

only worthwhile form of social amelioration is reinforced by showing its efficacy in these various cases: we have no picture of individual destitution untouched by personal charity or opportunities for self-help.

At its broadest, Charlotte's individualism is extended to inveigh against treating people as classes rather than individuals: thus Shirley decries class prejudice:

> 'All ridiculous, irrational crying up of one class, whether the same be aristocrat or democrat - all howling down of another class, whether clerical or military - all exacting injustice to individuals, whether monarch or mendicant - is really sickening to me:' (Vol II, p 73);

and Lucy Snowe, in 'Villette', deprecates the lack of feeling, where one gives generously to good causes, but refuses to help the individual in need:

> '... she had no heart to be touched ... While devoid of sympathy, she had a sufficiency of rational benevolence: she would give in the readiest manner to people she had never seen - rather, however, to classes than to individuals.' (Vol I, p 117)

Once again it is worth emphasising that this individualism was a perspective current amongst Charlotte's contemporaries; but her selection[1] and emphasis thereof may be seen as in part an extension of the consciousness involved in her economic action.

(xvi) Moralism

The final section in this chapter looks at Charlotte's moralism, both as a cognitive style in her own world view, and as an expressive style in her literary works. Unlike Emily[2], Charlotte's work situation did not provide an extreme isolation from the moralistic view of her

[1] Through a process of elective affinity: see above, Chapter 7, p 172

[2] See above, pp 309-310

contemporaries; and moreover she recognised that her readers would expect a moralistic expressive style. This recognition must have been confirmed by those reviewers who were shocked by the coarseness' (Gaskell: 282) of her writing, and would have liked even more moral signposts. But, although we have noted elements of a moralistic expressive style in all of Charlotte's novels, Charlotte was unwilling to adopt the degree of explicit moralism expected by some of her readers:

> 'The story is told. I think I now see the judicious reader putting on his spectacles to look for the moral. It would be an insult to his sagacity to offer directions. I only say, God speed him in the quest!"
> ('Shirley', Vol II, p 471)

The moralism that we do find in Charlotte's novels seems partly to be her own cognitive style, doubtless adopted from her contemporaries, but also reinforced through extension from her own strong work ethic, whose development was traced above.[1] Yet we also find a particular kind of moralistic expressive style in Charlotte's novels, i.e. the <u>self-justification</u> that we have already noted several times above.

The expressive style of self-justification has to be seen in relation to Charlotte's conception of her readers. Her frequent invocations to the 'Reader!' suggest that she was well aware of her readers whilst writing. She clearly expects her readers to be of the 'Middle Rank', as is shown by the following quotation from 'Shirley':

> '... a rioters' yell ... You never heard that sound, perhaps, reader? So much the better for your ears - perhaps for your heart; since, if it rends the air in hate to yourself, or to the men or principles you approve, the interests to which you wish well, Wrath wakens to the cry of Hate: the Lion shakes his mane, rises to the howl of the Hyena: Caste stands up, ireful, against Caste; and the indignant, wronged spirit of the Middle Rank bears down in zeal and scorn on the famished and furious mass of the Operative Class. It is difficult to be tolerant - difficult to be just - in such moments.'
> (Vol II, p 37)

[1] See above, p 330 ff

The effect of this expectation is that certain assumptions common to Charlotte and her expected readers are allowed to remain assumptions: whilst, where Charlotte suspects that there may be ideological differences, she is quick to attempt to explain and justify, to persuade of the truth, realism or morality of what she describes, or even to justify its portrayal.[1]

After the publication of 'Jane Eyre', Charlotte became highly aware that her morality and conventional morality were not the same. Thus she writes in a preface to the second edition of 'Jane Eyre':

> 'I mean the timorous or carping few who doubt the tendency of such books as 'Jane Eyre': in whose eyes whatever is unusual is wrong: ... Conventionality is not morality.' (pp viii-ix)

It is the recognition of the potential divergence between herself and her readers on questions of morality that leads Charlotte frequently to adopt her expressive style of self-justification, particularly in the spheres of status-consciousness and passionate love. With respect to status-consciousness, we find in 'Shirley', for instance, an assumption of easy empathy with Robert Moore: we need no justification of his presence in the novel, of our seeing his factory largely from his point of view, of the portrayal of his work in the counting-house, etc.; we are even expected to identify with him in his anger against the workers' threat against his property. In contrast, when William Farren, a 'decent' worker, is introduced, the chapter is headed, with tongue in cheek,

> 'Which the genteel reader is recommended to skip, low persons being here introduced.'
> (Vol II, p 1);

[1] For a general discussion of this issue, see Chapter 9, p 214 above.

and in the chapter itself William's decency is much stressed, as if he were purified for the reader's sake. Caroline Helstone, moreover, presents a strong case for communicating with William, which thus acts as an indirect justification of his presence in the novel.

Charlotte's self-justifying expressive style is, however, found most frequently in relation to passionate love. Certain critics, notably Miss Rigby in the 'Quarterly Review', had faulted her for dealing with such a subject in 'Jane Eyre'; a woman should not admit to passionate feelings. Charlotte responds to such criticism in 'Shirley', by giving to her two heroines a dialogue that presents a strong justification of the discussion and experience of love:

> 'Obtrusiveness is a crime; forwardness is a crime; and both disgust: but love! - no purest angel need blush to love! And when I see or hear either man or woman couple shame with love, I know their minds are coarse, their association debased. Many who think themselves refined ladies and gentlemen, and on whose lips the word 'vulgarity' is for ever hovering, cannot mention 'love' without betraying their own innate and imbecile degradation: it is a low feeling in their estimation, connected only with low ideas for them.'

The expressive style here goes beyond mere self-justification, to defiance.

In concluding this section, it may be noted that Charlotte's moralism, whether in the form of her own cognitive style, of the general expressive style of her novels, or of the particular expressive style of self-justification, provides the most striking contrast with the world view of her sister Emily and of 'Wuthering Heights', and illustrates the significant differences between the two sisters in terms of work situation and authorship role. Emily's work situation isolated her from the predominant moralistic cognitive style of her

contemporaries, unlike Charlotte's work, which forced her into greater social contact away from Haworth. Emily's work situation also meant that she did not find it necessary to adopt the strong work ethic which Charlotte extended into a more general moralism. Finally, Emily's isolation meant that she was less likely than Charlotte to recognize her reader's expectations of a moralistic expressive style; was less likely to be aware of divergencies between her world view and theirs;[1] and, with her authorship encompassing the publication of only one novel, was unable to develop (through literary feedback) a self-justifying or even defiant expressive style in a second novel.

(xvii) Conclusion

In this chapter a case study, as advocated in Chapter 11,[2] has been undertaken for each of our two authors. Description and explanation has been in terms of methodological individualsm, as outlined in Chapter 7.[3] The value-relevance of the study has been recognised, without ignoring the value-reference of the novels.[4] These features of our methodology contrast with a recent approach by Eagleton to the Brontë novels, an approach which follows a modified version of the Goldmann method that we criticised in Chapter 11.[5] Eagleton, in a deliberately free usage of the concept of 'categorial structure' (1975: 4), attempts by means of this concept to bring together:

> 'Text, author, ideology, social class, productive foces:' (1975: 13).

Indeed he is able to bring together these elements, but only by reading his presuppositions into the novels, and by correlating historical factors instead of demonstrating the connections between them. He continually attempts to interpret the Brontë sisters and their novels

1 Like Charlotte, Emily diverged from her readers in the portrayal of passionate love and in not accepting certain status conventions: see above, 305 ff

2 See above, Chapter 11, pp 264-265

3 See above, Chapter 7, p 148 ff

4 See above, Chapter 11, p 274

5 See above, Chapter 11, p 250 ff

in terms of grand historical forces, social classes whose clashes and compromises he claims are 'enacted' (1975: 119) or 'embodied' (1975: 13) in the novels. In claiming to 'decipher' (1975: 4) or 'detect' (1975: 9) in the lives and novels of the Brontë sisters the 'unfolding of a general grammar' (1975: 9), Eagleton is in practice imposing upon the analysis his pre-given schema, and thus ignoring the value-reference of his subject-matter. In the present chapter several critical references have been made to Eagleton's work, e.g. in relation to the selection of the Luddite setting in 'Shirley'[1], or the ending of 'Villette'[2]: in both these cases Eagleton's preconceptions appear to distort his account of Charlotte's intentions. A similar distortion can be found in Eagleton's claim that the major clash of values in Charlotte's world view consists in the conflict between, on the one hand, rationality and energetic individualism, and, on the other hand, submission and conservatism - this conflict, of course, conveniently embodying the antagonism between the industrial bourgeoisie and the landed aristocracy. (1975: 4) Yet we have seen how Charlotte's work ethic encourages both rational individualism and submission (to an unpleasant work situation), and that both the sets of values which Eagleton distinguishes are opposed to 'poetry', the force of which in Charlotte's world view Eagleton is unable to recognise, since 'poetry' does not correspond to the world views he wishes to read into Charlotte's works. Where Eagleton finds bourgeois values 'embodied' in Charlotte's novels, he appears to see these values as stemming from the bourgeoisie, without investigating the possibility that Charlotte, through her economic action, developed some values that she shares with industrialists (such as individualism), whilst she retained a sharp awareness of the points of divergence - e.g. where the work ethic or

[1] See above, p 352

[2] See above, p 361

the desire for independence is narrowed to monetary zeal in its own right. It is finally worth noting that Eagleton's approach is unable to differentiate adequately between the works of Emily and Charlotte: since he wishes to read into both the working of the same broad historical forces, his major distinction between the work of the two sisters is in terms of literary 'subtlety' (1975: 119), which of course can be used to account for and excuse any apparent divergencies from his preconceived model.

Having contrasted our approach with that of Eagleton, we may now summarise the major points that have emerged through our study of Charlotte Brontë.[1] We first presented an outline of Charlotte's biography in terms of sociological rationality, focusing upon her economic ends and means in relation to her values. We then attempted to relate wherever possible to her 'class' (in particular her economic action and work situation) those elements of her world view that we found expressed in her novels. This attempt was undertaken principally through the examination of two predominant themes to be found in all of Charlotte's novels, i.e. work and independence. Hardly surprisingly, it was discovered that the economic cognitions and evaluations that were manifested in Charlotte's novels were those that were central to her own economic consciousness. More interestingly, however, her work situation was found to be significant in accounting for: (a) the predominance of the work and independence themes; (b) the range of occupations portrayed in her novels (suggesting the importance of work in broadening or narrowing the range of one's social contacts); (c) the development in her attitudes towards social status. Other developments in Charlotte's world view were con-

[1] The summary of our work on Emily Brontë was presented in Section (vi) p 314 above.

sidered to be extensions, from the consciousness involved in her economic action or work situation, such as feminism and individualism; or were thought to be promotions, to aid her in her work, such as the strong work ethic (itself extended to related values and a more general moralistic cognitive style), and the realistic cognitive style, as expressed particularly in 'The Professor'.

Despite the predominance of the themes of work and independence, much variation was found in their treatment, and though this variation could at times be partly accounted for by developments in Charlotte's own world view (as in the atmosphere of loneliness and despair in which she wrote her last two novels), it was always necessary to see Charlotte's developing literary universes in relation to her literary contacts and her definition of her role as author. Thus we examined the differential significance for Charlotte of various forms of literary contact and of several kinds of 'success', and noted the particular salience of Charlotte's contact with literary critics. Her expectations and acknowledgements of the response to her novels were seen to influence the general form of her works, both in terms of focus and expressive style. The formative principles that were posited for each novel were considered to be of great importance in structuring the elements of its literary universe, from the broad level of the general structure of the novel (e.g. the allowance or exclusion of inconsistencies), through the utilisation of various literary and ideological devices, to the treatment of particular subject-matter and attitudes, e.g. the work ethic.

Throughout the analysis of Charlotte's novels, the utility of the concept of 'expressive style' was apparent; and its significance was not restricted to the general formative principles of the works: various subsidiary expressive styles were detected, generally related to moralism,

whether as the expression of a general cognitive style (a possible extension from the work ethic), or, as a reaction to expected or acknowledged reader-response, in the form of self-justification or even defiance. It was in the area of moralism, and of cognitive style more generally (Charlotte having to abandon much of her Angrian cognitive style, whilst Emily was able to retain Gondal), that the contrast with Emily Brontë was most fruitful. It is suggested that, in attempting to account for the divergent literary universes of Emily and Charlotte Brontë, one of the most significant contributions may be made through a careful comparison of their respective courses of economic action, their work situations and their literary roles.

## CONCLUSION TO PART IV

This is a suitable point to review the argument of the thesis as a whole, which encompasses the development of general models in the sociology of knowledge and literature, and their application to the analysis of the novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë.

In Part I, some widely differing theories in the sociology of knowledge were examined in the light of an analytical substructure-superstructure distinction, in order to esablish the kinds of relationship that may be posited between a substructure of social factors and a superstructure of thought. This study was carried out in order to develop a general approach to the sociology of knowledge that could be applied to the later (Part II) specific investigation of the development of consciousness from class factors. The analysis of theories in the sociology of knowledge with respect to the substructure (Chapter 2) revealed the necessity: (a) of including meaningful elements in the substructure; (b) of avoiding naive conceptions of group consciousness (here the critique of Goldmann was especially relevant); and (c) of refining the models of the relationships between motivation and belief, and between situation and consciousness (the theories of Pareto and Mannheim, and in particular the concepts of 'utility' and 'commitment', were found to be especially useful here).

In Chapter 3, several perspectives on the superstructure in the sociology of knowledge were discussed. Overarching conceptions of superstructure in terms of 'world view' were exmained, and assumptions of consistency and coherence criticised. (This theme was later taken up in the analysis of the concept of 'world view' in Chapter 6). Suggested differentiations of the superstructure were reviewed, such as Parsons' distinction between cognitive and evaluative elements (a dis-

tinction that was found to be of greater use in the analysis of substructural than of superstructural consciousness), and Scheler's delineation of discrete 'modes of knowledge' (which prefigures the concern with 'literature as a special case' in Part III). The most important contribution of Chapter 3, however, was the suggestion of four principal elements of consciousness that may be developed from a substructural action or situation: (a) pragmatic knolwedge; (b) legitimations; (c) promotions; (d) extensions.

In Chapter 4, various suggested relationships between substructure and superstructure were examined. Motivational theories for the development of consciousness were reviewed, in particular the pragmatic conception of consciousness, and the significance of the concepts of 'salience' and 'commitment' for an explanation of 'extensions'. The historical and structural context of consciousness development was recognised, and naive determinism was rejected in various forms, while emphasis was placed upon the contribution made by the theory of elective affinity.

In Part II, the general approach to the sociology of knowledge that had been put forward in Part I was applied to the analysis of the modes of development of 'world view' from elements subsumed under the concept of 'class'. This latter concept was examined in Chapter 5, taking from Weber the emphasis on the interplay of subjective factors with the conditioning role of economic elements, and the methodological individualist approach to class in means-end terms. For our purposes a broader conception of 'class' was advocated, including economic situation (and what it attains), economic action (and conditions thereof) and work situation.

In Chapter 6, various conceptions of 'Weltanschauung' were discussed. Rather than the traditional idea of 'Weltanschauung', which involved the

assumption of actual or ideal-typical consistency and coherence, a 'rag-bag' concept of world view was advocated, whose principal utility would lie in its capacity to reveal interrelations between the various elements of an individual's consciousness over a certain period of time. It was suggested that a world view has meaningful, stylistic and structural properties, and that these are best described in terms of attitudes, cognitive styles and cognitive structure.

In Chapter 7, the conceptualisations of class and world view were brought together in a model that applied the general sociology of knowledge approach (Part I) to the analysis of the development of aspects of world view from elements of class. An ideal-typical actor model was advocated, which did not neglect system or group analysis: e.g. various forms of 'class contact' were suggested - 'face-to-face', 'taking account' and 'identification'. A comparison was made of the concepts of consciousness put forward in Chapters 3 and 6, recognising the different purposes of each classification, i.e. for tracing modes of development of consciousness (Chapter 3) and for engendering concepts of consciousness at a suitable level of generality (Chapter 6). The development of world view was further analysed with respect to certain key 'points of development' in relation to class elements: i.e. the experience or evaluation of economic or work situation, and the cognitions and evaluations involved in economic action. The development of consciousness from class was considered to be most likely when economic situation/action or work situation were particularly salient for the actor. Finally, in accordance with the perspective put forward in Chapter 4, it was suggested that the individual's class-related consciousness, and more generally his world view, should be seen in a broader context, that might however be limited by compartmentalisation.

In Part III, the general model of the development of world view from class elements was applied to the special case of literary world views. Thus in Chapter 8 an attempt was made to analyse authorship as a class role. It was, however, found necessary to take into account the non-economic aspects of the author role, aspects that may mediate the influence of class elements: in particular, there was recognition of the various meanings of 'success' for the author, and of the differential salience of his several 'role contacts'. Nevertheless, the same approach of sociological rationality was advocated for the analysis of the author role as had been applied to the examination of class.

In Chapter 9, the enquiry into the nature of the author's literary act was pursued through the predominant conceptions of art as communication and expression. The sociology of expression was considered to be an important adjunct to the sociology of knowledge, and, when applied to literature, indicated: the potential creativity and relative autonomy of literary expression; its various degrees of selection and fabrication, including the development of explications, legitimations, cognitive styles and utilitarian expressions in the text; and the author's taking account of both the world view of his audience and their social definition of his work.

The theory of literature as expression was further explored in Chapter 10, where the analysis of the meanings 'expressed' in literature was seen to require the recognition of certain aspects of literary form; symbolic form (and the consequent problem of 'translation'); formative principles, and their relationship to themes, literary styles and expressive styles; the forms available to the author; and the general form of fiction as a public written statement, in whose creation the importance of values and literary and ideological devices must be noted.

The methodological debate in Chapter 11 centred around three issues that arose out of a critique of Goldmann's sociology of literature: the comparison of macro- and micro-analysis led to the recommendation of micro-structural case studies that would focus upon the author, his orientations and relationships, within a broader social context; the interpretation of literature in terms of 'world view' was defended, whilst rejecting assumptions of 'coherence' and 'totality'; the role of values in literary interpretation was recognised, both in terms of value-reference and value-relevance. To aid the elucidation of the general aspects of the world view of a novel, a list of questions was proposed, suggesting topics considered worthwhile bearing in mind during the analysis of the work.

In Part IV, the general model, whose construction occupied Parts I & II, and which traced potential developments of world view from class elements, was combined with the recognition of those factors seen in Part III to be relevant to an analysis of literary expression, and was applied to the undertaking of two case studies, focusing upon Charlotte and Emily Brontë and their novels. For each novel the formative principles were recognised, both in terms of predominant themes and expressive styles, and were wherever possible related both to the author's literary role and, through her own world view, to the elements of her class (especially her economic action and work situation). These two case studies, apart from suggesting certain specific hypotheses (such as Charlotte Brontë's utilitarian adoption of her strong work ethic as a 'promotion'), and besides supporting the general approach to the sociology of knowledge and literature expounded in previous chapters, provided an extensive demonstration of the utility of certain key concepts that were either adopted or introduced earlier in the thesis, i.e.; economic action and work situation; class contacts,

literary role contacts, and the author's 'taking account' of the latter; commitment and salience; the author's world view, including especially extensions, promotions and cognitive styles; the work's world view, including especially its formative principles, predominant themes, expressive styles, assumptions and legitimations; literary and ideological devices; available forms; value-reference and value-relevance. Of all these concepts, those that emerged most strongly in the study of Charlotte Brontë and her novels were economic action and work situation, literary role, formative principles and expressive style; and much of the weight of the comparison with Emily Brontë was carried by just three of these concepts: work situation, literary role and expressive style.

Overall, Part IV has consolidated the general argument of the thesis, i.e. that a coordinated sociology of knowledge and literature is viable at the level of particular authors and their literary works; and, more particularly, that a careful analytical model of the potential developments of world view from class elements, may be combined with a model of the factors to be recognised in the interpretation and explanation of literary expressions, to suggest significant points of analysis that should be born in mind when considering the influence of class upon the world views of authors and their works.

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